



NORTHLAND

NORTHLAND
REGIONAL PLAN FOR 2008/2009
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



**NORTHLAND
REGIONAL
PLAN
FOR
2008/2009**



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WELCOME



Welcome to the Ministry of Social Development's 2008/2009 Regional Plan for the Northland region.

The Ministry's aim is to help New Zealanders to live better lives. We do this by putting people – children, young people, families and communities – at the centre of all we do. We know that building successful lives starts when we value people.

This year I'd like to start by acknowledging our team for their outstanding efforts during 2007/2008. Many went beyond the call of duty, responding to the needs of our people and communities during two extreme weather events. For some, co-ordinating the clean-up and welfare response ended only in late December 2007.

Our ability to quickly swing into action reflects our strong relationships with other agencies working in Northland. In particular, our links with the Northland Intersectoral Forum, a group of 25 regional leaders, and the Taitokerau Iwi Chief Executives' Consortium are proving

invaluable in making a difference for the people who live here.

I must also recognise the tireless work of the many non-government and community organisations that provide services to our most vulnerable people and families, often in remote, rural communities. It is only by working together on the region's complex social issues that we can genuinely help Northland's people build successful lives.

Making such change starts when we value people and place them at the centre of our thinking and action. The results of this approach can already be seen in some of the significant improvements achieved over the last year. These include more children taking part in early childhood education, a drop in the unemployment rate and improved telephone access for the more isolated Northland communities.

Last year we also saw the start of a number of exciting projects. Nationally, the 'It's not OK' campaign is having a significant effect for people experiencing family violence.

Locally, we've supported three Northland Intersectoral Forum projects:

- Engaging Taitamariki in Learning is encouraging young people to stay in school or training and to undertake learning outside the classroom, through physical, cultural and other pursuits
- Connecting Young People is working with young people at risk of engaging with gangs, giving them opportunities and support to follow a different path
- the Otangarei Community Renewal project is working with this community to overcome past issues and develop

into a strong, vibrant and self-sufficient whole.

All this work focuses on overcoming challenges and enabling people to be successful in their lives. And that's what this Plan is about – over the next few pages we've set out our priorities and activities for the coming year. I'm confident our combined efforts will continue making a real, tangible difference to the lives of individuals, families and communities in the Northland region.

Graham Macpherson

Regional Commissioner for Social Development

"I must also recognise the tireless work of the many non-government and community organisations that provide services to our most vulnerable people and families, often in remote, rural communities."

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2007/2008

Our goals for last year were to work with individuals, families and their communities to drive positive change – to make a real difference to the lives of children, young people, working age people, older people and families and whānau.

In partnership with other government agencies, individuals and organisations, we developed and implemented a variety of initiatives to address Northland's important social issues – and to help build a strong, healthy society for the people who live here.

Highlights of our work include:

- **Our strengthening relationship with the Taitokerau Iwi Chief Executives' Consortium**, which is made up of the chief executives of seven iwi authorities: Te Aupōuri, Te Rarawa, Ngāti Kahu, Whaingaroa, Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Whātua and Ngāti Wai. In March 2008, the Chief Executives of the Ministry and the Consortium met to monitor progress and discuss how we can collaborate to help the people of Northland.
- **The Whangarei Youth Conference**, which we held in conjunction with local youth service providers – young people had the opportunity to present key youth issues directly to the Minister of Youth Affairs, as well as central and local government representatives and community providers.
- **Our support of the Amokura Family Violence Prevention Strategy with the Taitokerau Iwi Chief Executives' Consortium** – this initiative focuses on education and promotion, research, advocacy and provider development on the impact of family violence.
- **As part of Working New Zealand: Work-Focused Support**, the appointment of health and disability advisory roles to provide the right support and services to help people with ill-health or a disability move towards increased independence and, if appropriate, paid employment.
- **The Whangarei pilot of the Differential Response Approach**, which helps to ensure we respond appropriately to the increasing number of notifications of children, young people and families needing our help. The Approach enables us to focus our resources on the families that really need assistance while ensuring that everyone receives support suited to their needs.



OUR REGION



NORTHLAND AT A GLANCE

**WE'RE ONE OF
THE WARMEST**
REGIONS IN NEW ZEALAND

**AROUND
148,000 PEOPLE**
LIVE HERE – 32% IDENTIFY AS MĀORI

**AGRICULTURE,
TOURISM,**
FORESTRY, HORTICULTURE,
CONSTRUCTION AND MARINE
ENGINEERING DRIVE OUR ECONOMY

OUR GROSS
REGIONAL PRODUCT IS AROUND
\$3.4 BILLION ANNUALLY – ABOUT 3%
OF THE NATIONAL TOTAL

**WE HAVE
NEW ZEALAND'S**
NEWEST DEEPWATER PORT AT MARSDEN
POINT

FACING CHALLENGES, BUILDING ON OPPORTUNITIES

Why we do what we do

Social sector government agencies must work closely together to achieve the best results for New Zealanders. Often agencies' priorities don't always fit neatly together so we are contributing to the priorities of other agencies where we have shared interests. Sometimes this involves us as a working partner, at other times we lead by co-ordinating, streamlining and monitoring services.

Some of Northland's challenges are common to other regions around the country – the need for quality housing, an ageing population and increasing incidences of family violence. Others are more unique to us. Whether national or local, we need to address all challenges with smart, innovative solutions. We need to explore and take maximum advantage of Northland's opportunities to help our people build their lives and livelihoods.

WHAT WE KNOW...

Northland has experienced strong economic growth thanks to our assets – our historical, cultural and natural environments and our people. Many communities and iwi organisations are identifying innovative ways to make the most of what we have. Our proximity to Auckland also creates opportunities to attract industry, and people looking for a balanced lifestyle.

We're seeing improvement in many social areas, sometimes at a faster rate than the New Zealand average, including participation in early childhood education, educational attainment and our unemployment rate. However, despite these improvements, we still have a long way to go. Areas where we want to achieve faster improvement include our:

- high smoking rate – about 29% of our population aged 15 plus currently smoke
- low incomes – our average hourly rate is \$15, the national average is \$17
- household crowding – 11.9% of our population live in crowded housing compared with 10% nationally
- poor water quality in some areas
- high road casualties – we experience 19.4 road casualties per 100,000 people compared with 9.4 nationally.

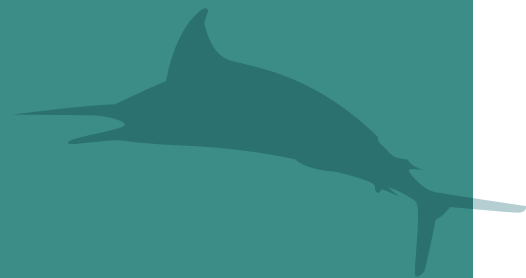
The number of students leaving school with higher qualifications increased by 5% between 2005 and 2006. However, too many of our young people – especially Māori – are leaving secondary school with little or no formal educational attainment.

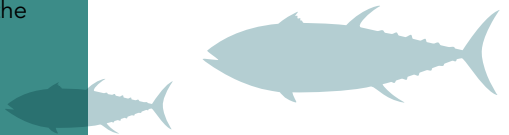


WHAT WE'RE DOING ABOUT IT...

We'll work with economic development agencies, communities, iwi and local industries to identify opportunities to maintain and grow our economy.

We'll continue working with our partners in the Northland Intersectoral Forum (NIF) to improve the lives of Northlanders. The NIF is a collaborative group made up of regional leaders from 25 central and local government agencies. The Ministry has three representatives in the NIF. (Read more on pages 12 and 18)

We'll work with the NIF agencies, schools, and communities to help our young people to make more positive choices, especially encouraging them to stay in school. (Read more on pages 12 and 13)



WHAT WE KNOW...	WHAT WE'RE DOING ABOUT IT...	
<p>Youth offending is an ongoing issue, and we're particularly concerned about young people who are 'invisible' to our services – those who are not involved with education or the workforce.</p>	<p>We'll work with the NIF agencies, the justice sector, schools and communities to encourage young people to remain connected with their communities and, in particular, to education so they can meet their life goals. (Read more on pages 12 and 13)</p> <p>We'll work to help those who are involved with the justice system or about to leave our care to make a positive move to independence. (Read more on page 13)</p>	
<p>Median annual incomes among Māori have dropped in the past year – down to \$20,332 from \$20,800. This compares with the national Māori median income of \$24,596. Overall, Northlanders earn a median income of \$23,400 a year compared with a national average of \$26,988.</p>	<p>We'll work closely with other government agencies, non-government organisations, local industry and employers to create opportunities for disadvantaged communities.</p> <p>We'll work closely with the region's iwi and hapū in the work they're doing in their communities. (Read more on page 18)</p>	<p>For us to make a difference in Northland, all our work requires close collaboration – within the Ministry and with our partners in the health, education and justice sectors and with community organisations and volunteers throughout the region. Collaboration is a feature of the initiatives we're undertaking in 2008/2009.</p> <p>The work we've outlined here in this Regional Plan fits neatly with the Ministry's 'big picture' strategies and goals. Working as part of a strong, cohesive nationwide team, we'll also act locally – delivering services that meet our region's unique needs.</p>
<p>As a region we're faced with an ageing population. Forecasts suggest that by the end of 2020 one in four New Zealanders will be older than 65 and in some urban centres older people will make up to a third of the population. This creates both a challenge and an opportunity – older people often face limited mobility, declining health and reduced economic wellbeing but they also offer a wealth of knowledge and experience we can draw on.</p>	<p>We'll also work closely with community providers to ensure older people enjoy the best possible health and safety and continue to participate in their communities.</p> <p>We'll continuously review our services to deliver to the changing needs of the region's older residents. (Read more on pages 15 and 17)</p>	
<p>There has been a lot of progress in providing essential repairs to sub-standard houses, however, many of our residents still live in poor-quality home environments, often unsafe and unhealthy. The Social Report 2007 ranks our region third (after Auckland and Gisborne) for unacceptable crowding levels, particularly in the Far North. Meanwhile, housing costs are rising and the demand for emergency housing exceeds supply.</p>	<p>We'll continue collaborating with housing and other service providers to increase the number of Northland people who are living in safe, warm, dry, affordable homes that are big enough to meet their needs. (Read more on pages 17 and 18)</p>	
<p>Climate change is likely to see more severe weather events occurring in our region.</p>	<p>We'll collaborate with other organisations to improve planning for future extreme weather events or natural disasters. (Read more on page 19)</p>	

OUR PRIORITIES FOR 2008/2009

The Ministry of Social Development is all about helping to build successful individuals – and in turn building strong, healthy families and communities.

We know we can't do this alone; that only by working with government and non-government organisations, with communities and with individuals can we really make a positive difference.

That's our focus – and it's reflected in our five key priorities for 2008/2009.



GIVE CHILDREN THE BEST START IN LIFE

Children are New Zealand's future – all children deserve to grow up in a safe and happy environment.



HELP YOUNG PEOPLE ACHIEVE THEIR POTENTIAL

Young people need to be supported to overcome barriers and develop their understanding and ability to make sound decisions about the issues and opportunities they face.





ENABLE PEOPLE TO LIVE INDEPENDENT LIVES

All New Zealanders need to have access to services and the ability to gain skills that will enable them to live healthy and productive lives.



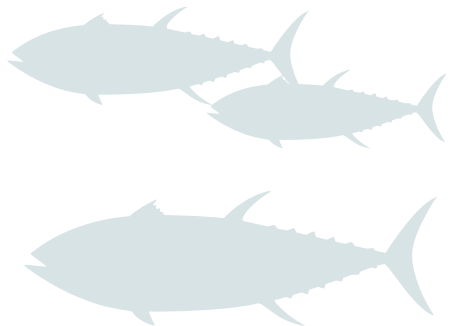
SUPPORT FAMILIES AND WHĀNAU TO BE SAFE AND RESILIENT

Families and whānau should be able to support their members' wellbeing, identity, participation in society and interdependence.



STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES

We need to build our relationships with, and the capability of, volunteers and community organisations to ensure that New Zealand families and communities are strong and resilient.



GIVE CHILDREN THE BEST START IN LIFE

Strong and loving families are vital to give children the best start in life.

Under this priority we aim to help all children to feel valued and respected, and to be involved in decisions that affect their lives. After all, healthy, safe and active children and their families are crucial to our social, economic and cultural strength.

In the coming year we will:

Focus on children

Working with The Pulse, other non-government organisations and parents/caregivers

This year our Early Years Service Hubs in Whangarei and Kaipara will provide vulnerable families with access to a range of co-ordinated and integrated services focused on children from pre-birth to school-entry age. Services will include:

- antenatal care
- Well Child Tamariki Ora
- early childhood education
- parenting information
- education and support
- home visits
- supported referrals to off-site services
- outreach services to engage and retain families.

Families learn about the agencies they can contact for help without the frustration of referrals from one agency to another. The services also benefit children by contributing to their health, safety, education, mental, emotional and physical development and general wellbeing.

Support families at home

In partnership with Tihewa Mauriora, Te Rūnanga o Te Rarawa and Ngāti Hine Social Services

Through our Family Start Programme, families with high needs in Northland receive intensive, home-based support services. Family/whānau workers will liaise with families to identify priorities and

help them to achieve them, so we'll see improvements in:

- children's health, education and social achievements
- parenting skills and practices
- children's and parents' personal and family circumstances.

Help teenage parents of young children

In partnership with Te Ora Hou

We'll work with and support Northland's Teen Parent Co-ordinator to help teenage parents with children under five access the health, education, government, social, financial and support services they and their children need – such as through the Housing New Zealand Corporation and parent support groups. This will help them to develop their parenting knowledge and skills, and provide their children with appropriate and effective health checks, childcare and education.

Ensure the right response at the right time

In partnership with non-government organisations

In 2008/2009 we'll implement the new Differential Response Approach in all Child, Youth and Family sites in Northland. The Approach will help us respond appropriately to notifications of children, young people and families needing our help. With increasing notification numbers, it's important that any actions we take – and services that we and other agencies provide – are appropriate to families' circumstances and delivered promptly and effectively.



Help children in our care into permanent homes

Working with caregivers

It's important our children and young people make the move from our care to a safe, secure and permanent environment. This means the care of an adult who's prepared to take responsibility for ensuring their needs are met and to allow them to achieve full independence. We'll:

- identify parents/caregivers, family/whānau and friends who have existing strong relationships with the children
- where this is not possible, find families/caregivers who are willing and able to commit to a lifelong relationship with the children (such as through guardianship).

Promote positive parenting

In partnership with various non-government organisations, particularly Parent and Family Services (Whangarei), the He Puna Marama Trust and Kaipara Abuse Prevention

Strategies with Kids – Information for Parents (SKIP) helps parents build their skills to raise their children in a positive, loving way, using limits and boundaries rather than physical discipline. The programme offers resources for parents and caregivers of children from birth to five years wanting advice and information.

During 2008/2009 we'll provide funding through the SKIP Local Initiatives Fund to support community activities that help parents learn more about positive parenting.

You can access SKIP resources and information on the Local Initiatives Fund at: www.familyservices.govt.nz

HELP YOUNG PEOPLE ACHIEVE THEIR POTENTIAL

By helping young people to strengthen and develop their self-esteem and resilience, we're encouraging personal development and achievements as well as better health.

Through our own services and with help from partner organisations, we're committed to helping young people to connect to their families and communities and develop pathways to further education, training or employment. This is also an important strategy for reducing re-offending and helping at-risk young people to turn their lives around for the better.

Research shows us that Māori are leaving school earlier than other students – in 2007, the retention rate for Māori aged 17-and-a-half years was 35.6 per cent per 100 compared with 53.5 per cent for Europeans. Also, more Māori are leaving school with fewer or no qualifications than non-Māori.

In the coming year we will:

Improve achievement among young Māori

Working in collaboration with other NIF agencies and the Iwi Chief Executives' Consortium

The Engaging Taitamariki in Learning project takes an intersectoral, five-year approach to addressing Māori educational underachievement.

The first year of this project will focus on:

- increasing whānau and iwi involvement in educating taitamariki in schools and communities
- developing personalised learning pathways for taitamariki
- increasing taitamariki engagement in sport, culture and leadership
- celebrating taitamariki potential and success.

The project is one of three NIF priority projects for 2008/2009.

Connect young people

Working in collaboration with other NIF agencies

The Connecting Young People project involves working collaboratively to prevent young people getting involved in gangs and to help those already involved in youth gangs.

Research identified the key factors influencing young people's decisions to join gangs were – disconnection from their family, culture, school, or community and a breakdown of support.

A development group comprising of government agencies, non-government organisations, and community, school and local government representatives

is implementing the actions identified through this research.

The project takes a comprehensive, community-wide approach by:

- creating connections between families, schools, community organisations and government services
- building on existing services and support networks
- identifying gaps in services or delivery and addressing any barriers to accessing available support
- providing opportunities and alternatives to a gang type way of life.

The project is one of three NIF priority projects for 2008/2009.

Encourage the transition to learning or work

In partnership with People Potential, Te Reo Irirangi o Te Hiku o Te Ika, Ngāti Hine Health Trust and Dargaville High School

Ideally, all young people should move seamlessly from school into work or further education and training. The reality is that some do not. Youth Transition Services makes it easier for young people aged 15 to 17, by helping them to set realistic goals, develop positive plans to improve their skills, and eventually participate in the workforce and their communities.

The Services are specifically designed for young people who:

- are not currently enrolled in education, training or work, or
- are enrolled in education but are not attending, or
- are at risk of leaving education with no secured work or training and have few or no qualifications, or



schools | plus

For more information visit:
www.schoolsplus.govt.nz

Address youth offending

In partnership with youth justice services, the New Zealand Police, the Courts, residential services, programme providers and alternative care providers

We'll address Northland's high youth offending rate with a range of initiatives and approaches. Each Child, Youth and Family site now has youth justice staff and we're exploring a potential Heartlands approach service option with the New Zealand Police and other agencies. We want to build a community-wide understanding of youth offending and the place and processes of youth justice, to reduce repeat offending, and the number of youth offenders placed in alternative care or residences.

Support young people with mental health issues

We'll locate a mental health worker in our Child, Youth and Family sites. The goal is to provide young people with access to effective mental health services, and to work with the adults in their lives to ensure an appropriate behaviour-response approach.

- have been identified as at risk of becoming dependent on income support, or
- are receiving an Independent Youth Benefit.

The Services link young people with motivational/support programmes and other social services to support and encourage their entrance into a transition pathway.

This year we'll also work with the Ministry of Education, through the Schools Plus initiative, to ensure young people stay in school or participate in appropriate training until they are 18. Options sought for students leaving school before 18 include training through youth training programmes, modern apprenticeships, local industry training organisations and individual employers.

Build young people's work skills

In partnership with non-government organisations

Like many other regions in New Zealand, Northland suffers from a shortage of skilled trades-people – a situation we're helping to address this year by supporting programmes such as the:

- Te Taitokerau Trade Training Apprenticeship Programme, provided by Te Rūnanga O Te Rarawa
- Northland College Carpentry Course,

provided by the Kaikohe (Rau Marama) Community Trust for senior high school students in a predominantly Māori area.

Our Enterprising Communities Grants Scheme is funding positions at the Rūnanga and the Community Trust to liaise with employers, to help place participants in appropriate employment and to provide in-work support services to help them settle into their jobs.

Mentor young people

Working with Ngā Manga Puriri and the Whangarei District Council

Tautoko Teina is a three-year mentoring programme for young people aged 8 to 24 years in Whangarei and Northland. It recognises the common issues young people may experience such as poor self-esteem, low motivation, ineffective connections to their families and communities and problems with their health. The programme engages skilled mentors to encourage participants on a pathway to education, training, work or other youth development opportunities.

Mentors will be recruited from the community, youth organisations, churches, iwi organisations, tertiary education institutions, government agencies and businesses. The programme aims to mentor 50 young people every year.

To find out the location of your nearest Youth Transition Service visit:
www.workandincome.govt.nz

ENABLE PEOPLE TO LIVE INDEPENDENT LIVES

Paid work provides the foundation to wellbeing for New Zealand families.

Through this priority area we aim to support all New Zealanders in contributing to their own lives and to their communities, the voluntary sector and the economy.

We'll be developing our services to ensure we provide the right support for people starting work or taking up other opportunities – and we'll be learning more about older people's issues, so that we respond with the right services at the right time.

*If your organisation would like to know more about **Enterprising Communities** funding visit: www.workandincome.govt.nz or call 0800 779 998*

In the coming year we will:

Offer work opportunities

Working with the Northland District Health Board, primary health organisations and community service providers

As part of Working New Zealand: Work-Focused Support we'll ensure that people receiving a Sickness or Invalid's Benefit, who want to work, are given every opportunity to do so. We'll provide people with more opportunities and access to support and services to enter or resume work.

We've introduced a number of advisory roles to provide the right service and support to people with ill-health or a disability. This year advisors and co-ordinators will work with the individual and their health professionals to identify their needs and goals – then establish the most appropriate support and services to help them move into suitable work, as their circumstances allow. Where work isn't an option, we'll support people to participate in their community.

We'll also work specifically with people receiving a Sickness or Invalid's Benefit with mild to moderate mental health conditions to support them to access appropriate treatment and realise their work goals.

Strengthen partnerships with industry

Working with local industries and key employers

Our partnerships with industries and major employers experiencing skill and labour shortages allow us to identify and maximise job opportunities for people who are ready to work for the long-term.

- Working with six potential employers, we've developed an eight-week pre-employment landscaping and fencing training programme, which includes unit standards that meet New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) requirements.
- We have contracted a provider to deliver pre-apprenticeship training for specific engineering employers in Northland. We want to have up to 50 people complete the training over the next year.
- We've worked with two major employers (and others are interested) to develop an NZQA-approved seven to eight-week pre-employment programme for home-based support workers.
- We've worked with one major employer to develop an NZQA-approved six-week programme focused on manufacturing and composites. In 2008/2009 we'll continue to develop these partnerships and foster new ones, to meet identified employment needs in our region and support growth for local employers.

Encourage community entrepreneurs

In partnership with non-government organisations

This year, through our Enterprising Communities Grants Scheme, we'll continue to help community groups to develop and grow community-owned businesses that will generate assets and employment opportunities for people finding it hard to get work.



In Northland, we've provided funding for a number of projects that are boosting employment in rural areas, as well as making a difference for their communities. Projects include:

- the Greenways Trust's three-year project to extend its firewood business, to provide firewood, ground maintenance and section-clearing work for people with ill-health or a disability in Dargaville/Kaipara
- working with the Northland District Health Board to pilot a restorative care model in home-based support for Northland's older people – while also providing training and work opportunities for people in Northland.

Help tertiary students make good decisions about study

In partnership with prospective and current students, parents, teachers and influencers

We help current students and potential students to make informed decisions about their study options, the types of financial assistance available and how to keep their borrowing as low as possible. We also provide students with the information they need to understand the financial realities of student life and how to get the most out of their investment.

This year we'll continue to develop and enhance our programmes including:

- On Course – an informative presentation helping mainly secondary students take the step up to tertiary education
- StudyWise – an in-depth session advising on study choice, costs of studying, StudyLink and Work and Income assistance, other funding options such as scholarships and grants, and the impacts of taking on a Student Loan
- StudyLink Expos – an opportunity for prospective students to get advice on the financial options including student loans, and discuss career choices
- MyStudyLink – an online service through which students can view and update their personal details
- two StudyLink scholarship programmes – the Bonded Merit Scholarship for students in their second year of study and the Step Up Scholarship for students in the first year of a degree who qualify for a Student Allowance.

Value our older people

In partnership with the business sector, business associations, other government agencies, community organisations and local government

Given the rising number of people aged 65 and over, we'll review our services to people in this age group. We'll trial a new service approach, and use the results to develop an appropriate, integrated service that provides older people with:

- improved access to the services to which they're entitled
- improved access to timely, relevant information on our services and support
- information on the social services available in their communities
- the ability to stay in their own homes and participate in their communities.

The SuperGold Card offers older people discounts and concessions on a range of products and services. We'll work to increase the number, location and value of these products and services.

To ensure Northland's older people are aware of these and other services, such as residential care, and health and recreation services, we'll repeat and extend the successful expo held in Whangarei in 2007.

To find out which businesses in the Northland region offer discounts to SuperGold cardholders visit:
www.supergold.govt.nz

SUPPORT FAMILIES AND WHĀNAU TO BE SAFE AND RESILIENT

Strong, resilient families that know how to look after themselves are vital to New Zealand's economic, social and cultural wellbeing.

While most Kiwi families cope well with the pressures of today's world, some do not – and they need our support.

In the coming year we will:

Act on family violence

In partnership with community service providers, the Taitokerau Iwi Chief Executives' Consortium, government agencies, community groups and local communities

We're involved in a range of initiatives aimed at reducing family violence in the Northland region. Work for 2008/2009 includes:

- The Amokura Family Violence Prevention Strategy – which works to raise awareness of family violence and encourage collaboration between families and community organisations. Led by the Amokura Family Violence Prevention Consortium, the Strategy has four components: education and promotion, research, advocacy and provider development and training (including the National Certificate in working with Abuse, Neglect and Violence).
- Training our staff to have the confidence and skills to identify family violence and refer people to the services and support they need through the Family Violence Intervention Programme. Our Family Violence Response Co-ordinators will build on the working relationships we have with other family violence service providers and support agencies.
- Upskilling of our people – a number of our team are studying for their National Certificate in working with Abuse, Neglect and Violence, and they'll pass on their knowledge to their colleagues. Family Violence Response Co-ordinators

also advise and support case managers who work with clients experiencing or witnessing family violence.

- Projects funded by the Family Violence Campaign Response Fund – the short-term fund supports some of the great ideas that communities have developed to eliminate family violence. The projects aim to change the attitudes and behaviours that ignore, excuse, minimise or trivialise this serious issue. Here in Northland we're supporting:
 - a media campaign in the Far North promoting a violence-free community
 - Mana Wahine Week – a celebration of wahine
 - a programme of hui and events in South Kaipara/Helensville to change community attitudes towards family violence.

Strengthen families

Partnering with other government agencies and community service providers

Strengthening Families provides co-ordinated support for families who are working with more than two agencies. Our Strengthening Families Co-ordinators in Whangarei and Kaitia help families gain access to the services they need by bringing together a family and all the agencies that play a part in helping them. At an initial meeting, families talk about their priorities and the agencies explain how they can help. It allows families to get better access to information and services to develop their own goals and solutions.

We'll expand the service in 2008/2009 by locating additional Co-ordinators

in non-government organisations and schools.

Identify families with multiple and complex needs

Working with other government agencies and non-government organisations

Our recently implemented Integrated Service Response identifies families with multiple and complex needs and provides them with services that aim to reduce their level of risk and build on their strengths. The programme strengthens links between a range of existing processes and services including our Family Violence Intervention Programme, the work of our Strengthening Families Co-ordinators, and our Family Start Programme. This year, Integrated Service Co-ordinators will work across the Ministry, and in partnership with other government agencies and non-government organisations, to support our most at-risk families by providing a co-ordinated interagency response. This effort seeks to ensure families receive the right support at the right time.

Improve housing conditions

In partnership with the Housing New Zealand Corporation, Ngāti Hine Forestry Trust, Te Rūnanga o Te Rarawa and Te Uri o Hau Developments

In 2008/2009 in partnership with the Housing New Zealand Corporation, we'll support three housing and wellbeing co-ordinators, each located with an iwi housing provider. These co-ordinators will work with agencies and iwi organisations to ensure people living in sub-standard housing in rural and remote communities:



- achieve tangible improvements in their living environment
- know about and have access to the support and services to which they're entitled
- have support to access work, training and business development opportunities.

Enhance families' home and life skills

In partnership with Kaipara Abuse Prevention Incorporated and Ngāti Hine Health Trust

Through the SAGES (older people as mentors) Programme, volunteers in Kaipara, Whangarei and the Far North are

- trained and supported to provide practical support for families whose wellbeing is at-risk. In 2008/2009 volunteers will provide one-on-one home and life skills mentoring, to strengthen parents' capacity to care for their families through:
- improved home management skills
 - positive parenting
 - a better understanding of their children's needs
 - making the best use of their resources
 - community links and a sense of community belonging
 - problem-solving skills that enable them to cope with challenges.

STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES

This priority recognises and responds to the enormous contribution made by volunteers and community organisations to New Zealand's social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing.

By building our relationships with this sector, we can work together to develop strong, resilient New Zealand families and communities.

For more information on Pathway to Partnership visit: www.msdc.govt.nz

In the coming year we will:

Strengthen community providers

In partnership with community service providers

Pathway to Partnership is a long-term plan that will make sure community organisations have the funding they need to deliver high-quality, effective services. At its core are the strong, supportive working relationships between government and the community sector.

The funding package – \$446 million nationally over four years – will be progressively introduced from July 2008. The new funding will enable us to:

- begin to move essential children, young people and family-focused services to full funding by 2011
- provide for annual cost adjustment payments
- address forecast volume increases
- focus more on achieving results and less on inputs or programmes
- enable providers to build their workforce capability and capacity
- support organisations to work more closely together to reduce duplication and get more resources into services.

The funding also builds on work that we're already doing, like simplifying our funding and contracting processes, moving some contracts to grants to reduce compliance costs and providing organisations with multi-year funding.

Transform Otangarei

Working in collaboration with other NIF agencies

Families in the Whangarei suburb of

Otangarei are working to overcome some challenges of recent years through a community renewal project sponsored by the NIF and led by the Housing New Zealand Corporation. The goals of the project are to:

- make Otangarei more vibrant, connected and self-sufficient
- improve the physical environment, making it a safer place
- improve government agencies' links with the community.

The project is one of three NIF priority projects for 2008/2009.

Boost businesses

Working with community organisations

Enterprising Communities Grants are being used to strengthen Northland's communities. Some projects we're funding include:

- Te Hua o te Kawariki Trust (in Omapere) to create micro-tourism ventures in Hokianga and attract inbound tour operators. The Trust has already successfully developed the Footprints Waipoua and Hokianga Crossings ventures.
- Three community project officers at Enterprise Northland's Kaipara, Far North and Whangarei offices, who will help communities to implement projects that will lead to economic growth, job opportunities and sustainable community benefits.

Projects such as these improve employment opportunities in rural areas, tap into tourism potential, provide people and organisations with the support they need to start a business, and improve access to essential agency services.



Improve access to government services in smaller centres

In partnership with government agencies, non-government organisations and local communities

Heartland Service Centres offer residents in provincial and rural New Zealand one-stop access to a range of government services and other community-based support services.

In 2008/2009 we'll work to increase the number of agencies delivering services in our Heartland Service Centres in Dargaville, Raumanga (Whangarei), Kaikohe and Kaitaia, which provide an invaluable connection point for information on a range of government agencies.

Support local-level planning

Working with local government, community organisations, central government agencies and iwi

Local Services Mapping helps communities identify ways to improve the development, planning, delivery, effectiveness and funding of social services

for families. Working with the various agencies and service providers within communities, the process 'maps' the services available and then seeks to build strong links between these services and between community and government.

Our focus for 2008/2009 is to complete an action plan for Whangarei. We'll also complete Local Services Mapping in Kaipara and the Far North.

Respond to natural disasters

Working with other government agencies and community service providers

We're actively involved with Northland's Welfare Advisory Group which co-ordinates the welfare response to events such as floods, earthquakes and eruptions.

In addition we're responsible for providing financial assistance for victims and supporting the clean up after these events.

In 2008/2009 we'll work with other agencies to ensure we are better prepared to respond to these events quickly and efficiently.

Bring services together in one place

We often work with people at critical times in their lives. Our research and experience tells us that the best results are achieved when these individuals are the ones making informed choices about how to make their lives successful.

At our new Linwood Community Link in Christchurch - government and community agencies work together to achieve positive results for these individuals and their families. Community Link wraps the right mix of services and supports around individuals and their families in a way that suits their particular needs and circumstances. The approach we're testing at Linwood is a new way of working which enables us to address the underlying needs of our clients. While it's early days and there's still a lot to learn, we're committed to using the aspects of the approach that are effective in our region.

THANKS

The details in this Plan reflect one aim: to help people in the Northland region find solutions to live better lives.

This is not always a simple job. There are no quick-fix solutions to the many issues some people face – and it's not a job we can do alone. Success requires our combined efforts with other government agencies and non-government organisations, along with communities and individuals. Working together provides New Zealand families and communities with the benefit of our many skills and resources.

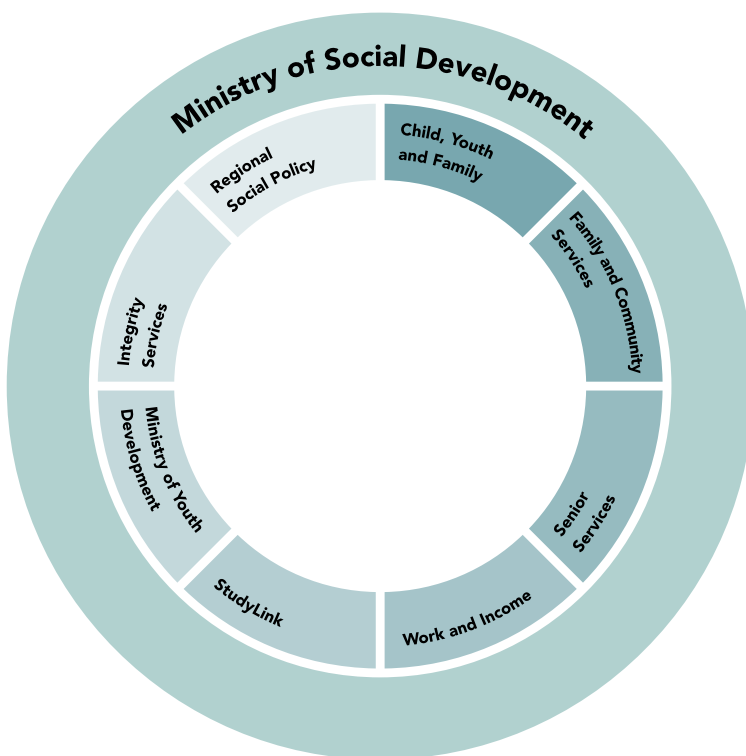
For the great results we've already achieved here in Northland, I thank the Ministry's staff and our partners in central and local government, local iwi and hapū, and the numerous voluntary and community-based organisations who have all contributed to making a difference in the lives of people in Northland.

Finally, I'd like to thank Marama Wiki, our previous Regional Commissioner for Social Development, for her tireless work. We wish her all the best with her new endeavours.

Thanks for your efforts. We look forward to working with you in 2008/2009!

OUR ORGANISATION

How the Ministry operates in our region



● Child, Youth and Family

Helps children and young people who are abused or neglected, or who commit offences by working with their families to help make them safe or to keep them from re-offending. We also provide adoption services. We have:

- 1 Service Centre
- 3 Sites.

● Family and Community Services

Helps to build connected communities and strong, resilient families by co-ordinating government and non-government organisations to support families to be well resourced, violence-free and connected to their communities. We have:

- 4 Heartland Service Centres
- 2 Heartland Outreach Centres.

● Senior Services

Administers the Community Services Card and the SuperGold Card and includes International Services and War Pension Services.

● Work and Income

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

- 8 Service Centres
- 1 Super Centre.

● StudyLink

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

- 1 Outreach Site.

● Ministry of Youth Development

Promotes the interests of young people aged between 12 and 24 years so that they are valued, nurtured, and challenged to reach their full potential.

● Integrity Services

Helps to ensure people are receiving their correct entitlements to financial assistance with an emphasis on preventing and minimising overpayments and fraud.

● Regional Social Policy

Connects the regions and National Office by providing early warning of the big risks that are emerging on the ground, supporting Regional Commissioners to achieve regional priorities and bringing issues to National Office that require a national policy response.

Ministry of Social Development

Northland Regional Office
2nd Floor
49-53 James Street
Whangarei 0110
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 (Card Holders)
0508 65 00 00 (Business Partners)

Work and Income

www.workandincome.govt.nz
0800 559 009

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