

## KEEPING KIDS SAFE

### CHILDREN'S EARLY YEARS ARE VITAL TO THEIR LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT; THEY ARE ALSO THE TIME CHILDREN ARE MOST AT RISK.

All families want to do their best by raising their children in a healthy, safe and nurturing environment, but some families are more vulnerable and need additional support. From experience we know that the earlier families get support, the better off their children are in the long term. Our focus will be on getting this help to all families who need support but with a particular emphasis on families with children aged under two years.

#### Never Ever Shake a Baby

The Government recently announced a set of initiatives to further protect vulnerable infants, including a new campaign reminding people to Never Ever Shake a Baby. The initiatives are designed to help protect our children aged under two years and feature advertising, new-parent education, community-worker support for abused children and for families, and protection of abuse victims. It focuses on new parents (especially young men) and it is expected to reach up to 5,000 new parents a year.

#### In 2009/2010, we will:

- put Child, Youth and Family social workers in six hospitals around the country
- develop multiagency plans to protect hospitalised children on their release
- run a multimedia awareness campaign.

#### Responding when we're needed

Differential Response means we can respond more creatively to families' needs when they come to the attention of Child, Youth and Family and we can work more closely with social service providers in the community. We'll be working with organisations to support families who don't need our help but who would benefit from community-based social services.

This year we'll be using Differential Response from Whangarei to Kaitiaki, Kaikohe and Dargaville, working face-to-face with families and community service providers to develop solutions that work for families' unique situations.

We are also making sure children and young people spend as little time as possible in care. Living with whānau or their broader hapū or iwi also helps them to feel secure.

#### Early Years Service Hubs

Early Years Service Hubs improve the accessibility of services for families who are at risk of missing out on the services available to them. The hubs are a central point where families can access a range of services including ante-natal care, Well Child health checks and immunisation programmes, and quality childcare and education for under five-year-olds. There are 13 hubs nationally, with two hubs in Northland, based in Whangarei and Dargaville.

#### Teen Parent Service Co-ordinators

Teen parents can face more obstacles than other parents. In particular they can be reluctant to approach services they need. We have a Teen Parent Service Co-ordinator based with Te Ora Hou in Whangarei. The co-ordinator helps teenage parents access health services and education providers for themselves and their children, government agencies and other social services. These parents are also put in touch with parent support groups who can help them to develop parenting knowledge and skills. Te Ora Hou offers education programmes for teenage mothers and early childhood education for tamariki of teen parents.

#### Violence-free relationships

There is an increased awareness of family violence and of how to access services and support to help build violence-free family relationships. We are committed to making sure families in our region are safe. The Ngāti Hine Health Trust delivers a programme for us, through Family Start, to help young fathers develop strong relationships with their children.

## VALUE FOR MONEY

### THE MINISTRY IS A LARGE ORGANISATION AND SEES A HUGE INVESTMENT FROM THE GOVERNMENT.

Given the current economic circumstances we must be prudent with our allocation of this investment. Our size is our strength; we have the opportunity to re-evaluate how we do things, and to make our processes more efficient and become more productive.

Most importantly we need to make sure we have the resources we need at the frontline, where our services are delivered.

Because of the recession more people need our help. We need to meet that demand for our services by providing increased resources to the frontline. We have made some tough decisions about our structure to make sure our people are where they need to be. This has already started happening. For example, we have just recruited more Work and Income case managers and we have re-deployed our qualified/registered social work staff to frontline roles in our Child, Youth and Family site offices. Making sure we have the right people in the right places to meet the increase in demand comes with additional costs.

We are also improving our systems, redesigning our business processes, and further reducing our overhead costs. One of the ways we are doing this is by developing technology to improve our clients' ability to help themselves. We are working on online tools for students and superannuitants so they can find out about their eligibility and make simple transactions. This will free up staff to help those with more complex needs.

In Northland, we have trained some of our staff to look at how we work to make sure we remove the clutter and deliver the most effective and efficient service possible. We are using the Lean Six Sigma business improvement method. This method works by making sure we are not duplicating work across groups, by removing any unnecessary process steps, and by building on staff solutions, with the aim of improving client services.

As we work with other agencies across Northland we'll find ways we can share resources. As a member of the Northland Intersectoral Forum (NIF), we continue to work with our partners to make sure our services get to people in the best way.

Last year we opened a Community Link centre in Kamo. A Community Link centre lets people tell their story only once to get access to the social services they need from one location. This improves our ability to help our clients, especially when some of their needs are closely linked, for example income, housing, health and employment.

In short, Northlanders will get better service from us.

## WHAT WE DO

### THIS PLAN HIGHLIGHTS SOME OF THE PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES OUR REGION IS UNDERTAKING TO MAKE NORTHLANDERS' LIVES BETTER. ALL THESE THINGS EXPAND ON OUR CORE BUSINESS.

Our core business is about providing services to those in real need, helping people to help themselves be successful in their lives. We take pride in helping Northlanders through:

- employment services – Work and Income
- income support and superannuation services – Work and Income and Senior Services
- the care and protection of at-risk children and young people and youth justice services – Child, Youth and Family
- connecting families with their communities and funding early intervention programmes – Family and Community Services
- student allowances and loans – StudyLink
- funding youth development programmes and supporting young people to have a say in decision making processes – Ministry of Youth Development
- protecting taxpayers' money through fraud investigations and debt collection – Integrity Services.

To do this we work with other government agencies, non-government organisations, advisory and industry groups, and communities and iwi. Together we aim to make a positive and lasting difference in the lives of Northlanders.

### The priorities for Northland in 2009/2010 are:

#### Employment

We want to keep as many Northlanders in work as possible. We will work with businesses and industries to help them stay viable and to be ready for the economic upswing.

#### Young People

We want our young people to thrive. We want them to be able to make positive choices about their lives and to influence their own futures. We will help them to engage in education, training or work. We want to help young offenders to break cycles of offending and to get back on the right path. To do this, we are implementing the Government's Youth Opportunities and Fresh Start packages.

#### Keeping Kids Safe

We want children to have the best start in life. We offer parents access to resources to build their parenting skills, especially young parents. We will keep children safe – particularly at-risk under two-year-olds.

#### Value for Money

We will make sure there is value for money in everything we do by running efficient and effective programmes and by sharing resources to keep overhead costs low.

#### 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 326 459

#### 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 889 900

#### SuperGold Card

0800 25 45 65 (Card Holders)  
0508 65 00 00 (Business Partners)

#### Work and Income

www.workandincome.govt.nz  
0800 559 009 (General Enquiries)  
0800 778 008 (Employer Line)

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NORTHLAND REGIONAL PLAN FOR 2009/2010

WITH 3,200 KM OF COASTLINE

AND 15 HARBOURS, YOU'RE NEVER MORE THAN 40 KILOMETRES AWAY FROM PRISTINE BEACHES AND BAYS

ALMOST A THIRD (29.3 PER CENT) OF OUR POPULATION ARE MĀORI

WE HAVE MORE CHILDREN AND OLDER PEOPLE THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE

'THE BIRTHPLACE OF A NATION'

IS WHAT NORTHLAND IS KNOWN AS. IT WAS THE LOCATION FOR THE COUNTRY'S FIRST CAPITAL, AND THE TREATY OF WAITANGI WAS SIGNED AT WAITANGI IN 1840

# REGIONAL COMMISSIONER'S FOREWORD



## Welcome to the Ministry of Social Development's Northland Regional Plan for 2009/2010.

In these times of change it is more important than ever that we work with our people, our families and our communities to help them become independent.

In the current economic environment our work becomes even more significant. Getting people into jobs is a priority, now more than ever. We will continue to ensure that people who hit hard times receive the financial assistance they are entitled to. We will also strive to bridge the gap between the demands of employers and the support our clients need to gain sustainable employment and appropriate training.

We are always working to make sure we operate in the most effective and efficient way possible. Our communities need to know we are delivering value for money. But we will not compromise our service. We are working to remove unnecessary administration so our case managers can spend more time helping those who need our help. We anticipate the demand for our services will increase in the coming year and we have a plan to meet our staffing needs and to manage the implications of any increase in our workload.

We are working to make sure our young people are able to reach their full potential. We are helping young people make life decisions about education, training and employment – it improves their outcomes and the outcomes of our region.

This plan highlights some of the initiatives we are undertaking in Northland. Most of them couldn't happen without our community, non-government and government groups working with us. As I said at the beginning, now more than ever we need to be working together for Northland.

Clive Manley  
Regional Commissioner  
for Social Development

## EMPLOYMENT

### HAVING A JOB IS KEY TO BEING ABLE TO PROVIDE FOR YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY.

**In these tough economic times we're working hard to help people stay in work, or get a job if they are not already in work. For those who can't find work, we will be here to help, but our first priority will always be to get people back into the workplace as soon as possible.**

#### Our local labour market

Agriculture, tourism, forestry and wood processing, horticulture, construction and marine engineering drive our local labour market. The arts, mining and aquaculture sectors are our emerging industries. We know the changing economy has had an impact on all of our major industries and we have already seen a reduction in tourism numbers, and in construction.

In this environment we need to think smarter about how we do things. Changing how we work with employers is one way we are doing this. Knowing what our employers need and matching people's skills to that need, will see us get results for employers and for people looking for work. Training people so they have the skills needed by Northland's employers is an important step.

### Working with employers

We hosted a regional economic summit – Keep Northland Working – to maintain the momentum of the Job Summit.<sup>1</sup> At the summit, we identified there will be a future demand from forestry owners and the forestry industry. We will be talking to the owners of Northland's forests to help identify and meet their workforce needs. We will work with the industry to identify training gaps. We will help jobseekers get the right training.

#### Industry/employer partnerships

We work with industries at a national level to minimise skill and labour shortages, and to maximise job opportunities. These partnerships are designed to address the needs of industries by delivering targeted industry-specific skills training and, at the same time, jobs for programme participants.

We currently have 80 industry and major employer partnerships nationwide. These partnerships include those with major industries like agriculture, construction and hospitality. We also have partnerships with regional Chambers of Commerce and large employers like Telecom, Air New Zealand, Fonterra, Westpac and McDonald's.

In our region we are working with local businesses to support them with skilled staff where there is a potential to grow. The Northland region is currently providing staff with the appropriate training for six of our local industries, including healthcare and engineering.

Our industry partners include HarvestPro, Hancock Forest Management, Ngāti Hine Forestry Trust, Selwyn Park, Ryman Healthcare, Idea, Access Homehealth, Tai Tokerau Primary Health Organisation, Northland District Health Board and Multiskill.

### Straight 2 Work

We run Straight 2 Work programmes with most of our industry and employer partners. These programmes offer pre- and post-employment training and support. They are developed by industry for industry, making the training relevant to the needs of employers.

**In 2009/2010 we already have plans to run training programmes with our forestry, hospitality and meatworks partners. More programmes will be developed as we identify other industry partnerships.**

#### Help keep businesses going

Businesses with more than 50 staff that are experiencing a temporary downturn can get extra help from us through the Job Support Scheme. The scheme pays an allowance for those workers who agree to work reduced hours. This means employers can keep as many jobs as possible while firms' earnings are down. Right now we are helping businesses through this scheme in the Northland Region.

### Getting people into work

#### Our 'Work First' focus

We are finding that the type of person coming to us for job search help has changed – they have more skills and a different expectation of our services. This has meant that we have had to respond to better meet their needs.

We have changed our service delivery model to assess how quickly we can get people back into work. We have improved the ease of finding work for self driven jobseekers, improved our services to employers, and ensured that appropriate job vacancies are made more readily available. If a person loses their job, it's important they find another one quickly. They are more likely to be attractive to employers while their skills are current and they still have confidence.

**We want Northlanders to get into work and to stay in work. In 2009/2010 we'll:**

- form partnerships with local industries and employers to help them get the right people with the right skills
- make sure jobseekers have the right information about our local labour market, and have the tools to access it.

#### Help for people affected by redundancy

Despite a business's best efforts to stay afloat, there will be times when it's not enough. When this happens, we will work hard to help those people worst affected by redundancy to find other job opportunities.

Our redundancy support team co-ordinates with Career Services and Inland Revenue. Together they have made sure that businesses have been able to put staff facing redundancy in touch with the most relevant services to find other job opportunities and to get financial support.

For people who have been made redundant and can't find other work, we deliver the ReStart package. ReStart offers financial help for up to 16 weeks for those people who have been made redundant and need extra help. So far, we have been able to help 183 people in our region<sup>2</sup>.

## YOUNG PEOPLE

### NORTHLAND'S YOUNG PEOPLE ARE OUR FUTURE LEADERS.

**We want our young people to make positive choices about their future and to have the right information to make good life decisions. Young people are most successful when they have a purpose. Education, training and work can offer that purpose.**

**If our young people get into trouble with the law, we want to help them get on the right track. For the small number of young people who are committing serious crimes, we're taking action in an effort to stop them from becoming career criminals.**

### Youth employment

It's not unusual for a young person to be out of work when they start out in the labour force. But we need to make sure they're not discouraged by this, and they stay motivated and keep their work habits. We also know there are young people out there who just need a bit of help to get into work and plan a career.

#### Youth Opportunities package

Times are hard for communities and their young people. The number of young people who don't have a job is four times higher now than it was this time last year. The Government announced the Youth Opportunities package, working with employers and communities to find opportunities for 16 to 24-year-olds, to work, train or stay in education.

- In 2009/2010 as part of the Youth Opportunities package we will:
- fund entry-level jobs for six months, to build experience and confidence
- make 3,000 places for young people to work on community projects
- create extra job training placements through industry partnerships
- expand the Limited Service Volunteer Scheme by an extra 1,250 places.

**Industry and employer partnerships**  
In Northland, our young jobseekers can access the Straight 2 Work programmes and a youth-focused cadet scheme.

The cadet scheme provides training in life and practical skills for 17 to 24-year-olds to help them make the transition to work. When they finish the programme the cadets will be interviewed for potential placements within their local councils. Collectively, the councils then take on up to eight cadets for 10 months, giving them the opportunity to learn long-term work skills.

We have a Cadet Mentor to support the cadets while they work with the councils. The mentor also helps those cadets who don't get jobs with the councils to find alternative employment.

**In 2009/2010 we'll help Northland's young people get jobs by:**

- helping them get industry relevant skills
- finding workplaces where young people can work, learn and receive ongoing mentoring, support and guidance
- helping them make informed decisions about school, training and work.

### Getting young people to reach their potential

Lots of our young people are doing just fine. They know what path they want to take and have an idea of where they want to go in life. We can give these young people opportunities to participate in development activities and decision making.

Young people are more successful when they are engaged. Some need more help than others to find a meaningful activity that will keep them out of trouble. For young people who need help staying on the right path we have programmes that will help them to make good decisions.

We have three Youth Transition Services (YTS) hubs in Northland – in Kawakawa, Kaitiāia and Whangarei.

Through programmes like Youth Transition Services, we're providing the young people of the Northland Region with opportunities to make informed decisions about school, training and work so they can build their wellbeing and independence. We also run programmes that will help build self-esteem, leadership and decision-making skills in our young leaders.

#### Student support

Over the next year we will extend the MyStudyLink online account service so students can assess their eligibility for most forms of support and apply for it online in one seamless process.

### Getting young people on the right path

We provide intensive programmes for those young people who are already in the youth justice system, or who are very close to entering it.

#### Fresh Start

In August 2009 the Prime Minister announced an expanded Fresh Start for Young Offenders programme, building on the youth justice announcements made earlier in the year. The aim of the programme is to stop young people from reoffending by helping young people involved in low-level offending to get back on track, by holding serious and persistent young offenders to account, and by addressing the root causes of offending.

Some of the initiatives, announced as part of Fresh Start for Young Offenders, include:

- structured community youth programmes for low-level young offenders
- participation in either community or residential court-ordered drug and alcohol programmes, parenting and mentoring programmes
- Youth Court-supervised camps and greater Youth Court powers
- Supervision with Activity Orders with extra places in a range of programmes that incorporate elements of military-style training
- military-style activity camps for serious young offenders.

#### Reducing gang participation – Connecting Young People

It is important to us that young people who might get involved with or who are already in a youth gang have a way out. We have worked with a number of other agencies to set up a direct referral team to work with young people (aged 10–20 years) who are at risk of joining or who have already joined a youth gang. These young people and their families will be connected with education, employment or training opportunities. They will be supported to change their lives.

**In 2009/2010 we'll work to reduce youth offending rates by:**

- putting multiagency plans in place to help Northland's most serious youth offenders change their lives
- having a youth justice co-ordinator on site at the Pulse (Whangarei).

#### Reducing youth offending

A small number of young people get caught in cycles of offending. We know we can achieve lasting change when whole communities work together to develop solutions – especially in encouraging those young people to connect to education, training or work. We have teamed up with the New Zealand Police in Kaitiāia to deliver a three-day camp for youth offenders to mentor them and provide cultural opportunities.

<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister's Summit on Employment (the Job Summit) was held in February 2009 as a forum to generate practical, achievable steps to save and create as many jobs as possible.

<sup>2</sup> As at 14 August 2009.