

FOREWORD

Issue 36 of the Social Policy Journal of New Zealand contains a major theme on Measuring Ethnicity, and the guest editor for these papers is Paul Callister from Victoria University of Wellington. This issue also includes a theme on KiwiSaver, a paper based on data from the Christchurch Health and Development Study, and research papers on a range of topics, including social welfare benefits, the social services sector, childhood nutrition and the costs of blindness.

Nearly half of Issue 36 is devoted to papers, research notes and book reviews on the theme of Measuring Ethnicity. Paul Callister's "An Introduction to the Theme" describes how these papers came to be. There are five main issues papers. The first, by Julie Walling, Desi Small-Rodriguez and Tahu Kukutai compares Waikato-Tainui iwi registration data with Census data and recommends that in future the Census question should include an iwi registration prompt.

Tahu Kukutai and Paul Callister look at the increasing proportion of young people who identify with multiple ethnicities, and explore how their general willingness to pick their "main" ethnic group can potentially help us better understand multiple ethnicity. Drawing on longitudinal data from SoFIE, Kristie Carter, Michael Hayward, Tony Blakely and Caroline Shaw, of Otago University's Health Inequalities Research Programme, explore changes in self-defined ethnic identity over time; they determine several interesting predictors of changing ethnic self-identification, one of which is having poorer self-rated health.

According to the article by Tahu Kukutai and Robert Didham, people are increasingly choosing to identify "New Zealander" as one of their ethnicities. This includes people who previously would have described themselves as "New Zealand European", as well as people of other ethnicities, such as Maori, who are choosing the term "New Zealander" instead of or as well as other ethnic identities – and the authors explore this pattern in the context of parallel trends in Canada and Australia. . In the last of the main Measuring Ethnicity papers, Paul Callister and Robert Didham use the findings of the Human Genome project as a launching point to compare cultural and biological constructions of the concepts of race and ethnicity.

The Measuring Ethnicity theme also includes research notes and book reviews. Paul Hamer discusses the challenges to measuring Māori in Australia, and why it is worthwhile making the effort. Frances Leather describes how prioritising ethnicity data from secondary schools leads to significant undercounting of Pasifika and Asian students. Finally, Karen Baehler and Cluny Macpherson provide separate and independent reviews of a book by David Bromell, *Ethnicity, Identity and Public Policy: Critical Perspectives on Multiculturalism*, recently published by the Institute of Policy Studies at Victoria University of Wellington.

The theme on KiwiSaver comprises three papers. Geoff Rashbrooke's paper places the New Zealand system in an international context, where it can be seen to have multiple advantages. Alison O'Connell compares KiwiSaver to a similar scheme, one recently put into effect in the United Kingdom, and (in agreement with Geoff Rashbrooke's analysis) finds that KiwiSaver's simplicity is a major asset. The article by John Gibson, Chris Hector and Trinh Le evaluates the distributional effects of KiwiSaver and related tax incentives. (Their paper was accepted for publication in 2008, and some changes have been made to KiwiSaver in the

meanwhile. The changes are footnoted, but the analysis is of a slightly earlier snapshot of the system.)

The social service sector provides the theme for two articles in Issue 36. Judy Whitcombe explores the restructuring of the public sector over the 1980s and 1990s, the influence that this had on the implementation of social policy since then, and how this impact has been addressed in recent years. Continuing with concerns around outcomes of this restructuring and, specifically, its effect on social services, Hal Levine's article focuses on the response of a particular service provider, Barnardos, and its work towards reforming its organisation through service integration.

Several papers deal with the lives of children. Moira Wilson and Daniel Soughtton use the Ministry of Social Development's Benefit Dynamics Dataset to determine the likelihood of children at different ages to be included in a social welfare benefit. This updates a similar analysis published in the *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand* in 2002. The Christchurch Health and Development Study provides the longitudinal data for Dannette Marie, David Fergusson and Joseph Boden's study, which explores the associations between ethnic identity and exposure to childhood maltreatment.

Mat Walton, Louise Signal and George Thomson of the Health Promotion and Policy Research Unit, in the Department of Public Health at the University of Otago, examine the role of household economic resources and deprivation as a determinant of childhood nutrition and childhood overweight and obesity, and explore broad policy options to improve nutrition and reduce differences in overweight and obesity rates between ethnic and socio-economic groups. Issue 36 is rounded out with an exploration, by Jonathan Godfrey and Deborah Brunning, of both the incurred and the true costs of blindness faced by New Zealand's blind and vision-impaired community.

I think you will find this issue of the *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand* to be a stimulating and informative read.

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