



Services for Older People Mailing

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Services for Older People Conference Report:
Justice and Compassion in Action

This issue of our Services for Older People newsletter is devoted entirely to reporting our biennial conference held in Napier, 9-11 April 2008. The next issue of our newsletter later in June will include a full Budget analysis as well as the usual wide range of articles on sector issues.

“For-People” rather than For-profit

The call to celebrate and build on the central identity of the social services as “For-People” rather than “For-Profit” from Australian social service leader Lin Hatfield Dodds sums up a key theme of the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) conference 2008 “Justice and Compassion in Action”.

Let us stop defining ourselves by what we are “not” – not-for-profit, non-Government – and start naming who we are “for” – namely for people! This year’s conference was closely aligned to the Council’s recently launched programme for promoting a just and compassionate society, ‘Let Us Look After Each Other, Aroha tētahi ki tētahi’.

NZCCSS members provide services at around 250 different locations throughout NZ that include informal, community and parish-based initiatives for older people through to formal home support services, residential aged care,



supported rental accommodation and retirement villages.

In her keynote address to the conference Lin Hatfield Dodds spoke of the “value added’ by Christian-based organisations.

They deliver much the same services but underlying this work is the shared biblical vision of “a renewed earth” and the preferential option for the poor. “We are not business. The seductive call to mimic the corporate world must be seen for what it is – a challenge to our core identity...”

> continued inside

“For-People” rather than For-profit

Equally, we have a wide reach and mandate but are not the state. While we can and will continue to work with government in the delivery and evaluation of essential support and caring services, in a democracy a social safety net is a core responsibility of the state”.

Dodds urged providers of aged care in New Zealand to continue to advocate for and demand just outcomes beyond the status quo, to stand for inclusion not inequality and to challenge policy makers to meet their obligations – all on behalf of those people who “struggle to live with dignity in the face of vulnerability and disadvantage”.

Social Justice for older People – Will New Zealand be a great place to age?

In housing it is a ‘unit’, in social services a ‘case’, in health care a ‘bed’ but what it is actually all about is the person
- Satya Brink.

Other countries around the world are further advanced along the path towards an ageing population and Canadian sociologist Satya Brink helped the conference to draw some lessons from this. Dr. Brink urged the conference to recognise the intergenerational dimension of social justice, that fair contribution and fair access to resources is available to all people within a country, over their whole life course and between the generations.



Countries such as Denmark or the Netherlands have delivered greater social justice for older people and share a number of common characteristics in their responses. A “life cycle” approach to ageing using

an integrated system of care & support that blurs boundaries between different forms. Housing stock has been improved through modification of existing homes and appropriate design of new housing. There is more consumer choice and shared decision-making in care & services. Older people spend less time in institutional care because lower level care is better.

The quality and appropriateness of housing for older people is a central component in the well-being of older people. The interventions in housing services and health care change at different rates and any intervention should be directed to the person and not tied to housing. Life span housing that accommodates changing functional capacity helps ensure that older people can continue to live in their place of choice as long as they wish.

“New Zealand has about ten years to be ready for the seniors boom that will peak in 2036” she says. Our country is in the transition into the third phase of ageing population where a high proportion of the population is aged over 65 and they are healthier with lower rates of disability. She points out that it is important not to “overbuild” and our “made for NZ” responses to this social change must be flexible to allow for the decreases in population after the peak years.

Meeting and beginning to understand

Events began with delegates going out to Waipatu Marae near Hastings for a powhiri welcome to open the conference. The warmth and sincerity of the welcome with dance, music and shared meal provided an ideal start to the conference.

Ngahiwi Tomoana Board Chair of the Ngati Kahungunu iwi introduced the conference delegates to the present struggles of their iwi in the context of centuries of the history of the descendants of Kahungunu. In the face of loss of land and huge social and economic pressures, the iwi is proud of its work in protecting the integrity of remaining lands, strengthening their economic base and working to deepen their cultural identity. Much of this work is led by kaumatua, who are greatly honoured for their knowledge of tikanga, the “right way” to do things.

In a workshop the following day the conference heard about how the iwi is using key strands of the culture to deepen the connections between Maori young and old and honour the contribution of older iwi members



Photos from the powhiri at the Waipatu Marae

“Hospital is a place where you go to die” – barriers to health care for older Maori

Kaumatua for Hawkes Bay DHB, Bill Stirling shared some of his experiences in trying to help link older Maori into health services. Many older Maori are still very influenced by the experiences of their tribes who only knew health services and hospitals as places “where you go to die”.

He urged all those working with older Maori to keep it simple, not to make obtaining help too complicated and to take account of their social situations.

A key partnership between the Maori Anglican Church Te Tai Tokerau and Anglican social service organisation Selwyn Foundation has emerged over the past six years. Although there are very few Maori residents in any of the residential care or retirement units offered by Selwyn, there is much need for social, spiritual and healthcare support for older Maori.

In the Far North, Auckland and Waikato Archdeacon Moses Cherrington has worked to establish a programme to connect with older Maori. Many live in isolated rural areas and poor housing, lack of access

to transport and healthcare are all challenges they face. The pastors visit people of all convictions and work with agencies to try and organise home improvement like railings on steps or access to health professionals.

Innovative housing ideas for older people

Innovations and new ideas for meeting the housing challenges facing older people were key topics covered in the workshop sessions.

The award-winning supported living units at Anglican Care’s Waipatu House were the subject of much interested discussion and analysis in their workshop. Integrating independent living units into the existing residential care facility at Waipatu House has created an environment where older people can have their units easily modified to receive higher level care services at a later time should they need them without having to move from their chosen apartment.

Therese Quinlivan Director of Community Housing Aotearoa led a workshop based on a United Kingdom case study of Home Improvement Agencies which provide help to older tenants to repair, maintain or adapt their homes. Given the almost complete lack of such services in NZ, there is an urgent need for social services, government agencies and the private sector to explore what can be done to assist older people in this area.

Technology Challenges: Getting past the “Hype Cycle”

Take the human factor seriously in planning your IT projects, IT expert Ray Delany urged the conference in his keynote address. Keeping people in the focus when introducing information technology is vital because the latest technology and the most sophisticated systems are of no use if the people who are meant to be using them do not understand them or want them.

He also pointed out that new technology infiltrates into society in a predictable way and it is important not to go too soon (technology not proven) or too late (left behind). Using a case study of Selwyn Foundation in the subsequent workshop he showed one way a successful “technology for independence” IT project was managed. The many challenges of managing IT projects, large and small, need to be recognised and planned into the process of change.

Beehive perspective: Working together

Social Development Minister Ruth Dyson joined the first morning of the conference and set out the wider picture of what Government is doing for older people. She spoke of the recent launch of the NZ Carers Strategy, a cross-government work programme aimed to improve the support and training of informal carers. The initiatives to protect older people from violence and financial abuse through the Family Violence campaign and strengthening the powers of attorney legislation are other examples of the government's commitment to the wellbeing of older people.

She acknowledged the vast amount of work done by the sector to support older people and she finished her speech with a call for all sectors (central and local government and community organisations) to work together to make real improvements for older people.

Doing things better while managing the costs – the researcher's contribution

Finding the right way to find out what care & support older people really need, getting the right care to the right person at the right time and identifying the factors in success – these are the three ways research is helping health services make the world a better place for older people, according to Matthew Parsons of Auckland University.

The InterRAI needs assessment tool has been touted as the way to bring needs assessment services throughout all DHBs onto the same footing while also doing a better job of finding out what help and care older people really need. Matthew's data shows the difficulty in deciding what is best – the consensus from the trials done with InterRAI is that it does not cost less than current systems (and may cost more) but does seem to do a better job at picking up the range of health care needs.

Targeting services to the right people at the right time will be the way to help manage rising costs and demand for services. DHBs are trying to save expensive hospital acute care dollars by discharging people as soon as possible. Restorative home based care can help older people with high needs get out of hospital and back into their homes – but if the wrong people are chosen

the consequences are expensive re-admissions at one end or service overkill when the person really may only need some household support.

Maximising peoples' independence and participation in society is a goal for health services and benchmarking the measures of success in doing this is a research challenge. He discussed some of the measures that may help.

International experience dictates that some level of targeting is required to help manage the increasing demand for services. The challenge is to ensure that this targeting is done in a way that ensures older people continue to be able to participate in society.

Grace, the Mob, Care-brokers and Kaumatua – Keynote Panel



An undoubted highlight of the conference was the keynote panel on Friday morning. The panel of kaumatua Bill Stirling, PHO Chair Hamish Kynoch, DHB CEO Chris Clarke and Wesley Care Director David Hanna each addressed the conference and then responded to each other's presentations and questions participants developed from their discussion tables.

Chris shared the story of "Grace", the grassroots activist in Wairoa who in her own unorthodox way gained the attention of the DHB CEO and mobilised a community to advocate for health services they needed.

David shared a short film about his agency's work with the Mongrel Mob as an example of breaking paradigms and taking risks in social services.

Hamish encouraged the conference to look to work with PHOs as "care-brokers" who are working with their populations to keep them well rather than simply treating illnesses. Bill observed the changes in Maori society meaning that whanau are less able to support their older people themselves and are becoming more open to the option of residential care.

The Place of Spirituality and Older People

Spirituality places a vital role in well-being. The work of the Tai Tokerau Anglican Maori diocese reported above is one example of this that featured at the conference. Another distinctive example of the Christian calling to social service is faith community nursing. The movement is growing in NZ and parish nurse Anne Simonsen shared her experience of establishing faith community nursing in Taradale. A holistic approach to understanding health and wellbeing combined with active involvement in a community means that the nurse can be a point of contact, advocate for services and help close some of the gaps in care and support that exist.

New Paradigms in Residential care – restorative care

Restorative approaches to home support have proved very successful and it is only logical to explore how the lessons learned in home support could be applied to residential care settings. Matthew Parsons reported on the results of trials in Northland with residential respite care with a restorative focus that show improved outcomes in terms of less functional deterioration for the older person in care and reduced stress levels for carers in the weeks following the return from respite.

Another restorative programme in a residential setting has been the PILS programme that has increased mobility and wellbeing for groups of older people in residential settings. However, overall the evidence is mixed about the “success” of such approaches in residential care. Matthew’s message is that it is the qualitative aspects that are more important, such as improved and increased communication between staff and residents and an approach to care that is more responsive to changes in health of the resident.

Dementia – responding to a growing need

Responding to the growing incidence of dementia as our population ages is one of the greatest social and healthcare challenges NZ is facing. Two workshops at the conference looked at ways that NZCCSS member organisations are responding to this in their services. In the South Island Presbyterian Support has pioneered a range of dementia services that include a purpose-

built daycare facility and home-hosting programmes for older people in smaller rural communities.

In the lower North Island, Presbyterian Support has sought to incorporate the principles of justice and compassion into its residential care work with older people suffering dementia.

Employers who “go the extra mile...”

Volunteers are the lifeblood of NGOs and this is the case for Christian social services. Receiving recognition and appreciation is a key part of supporting volunteers and their contribution, according to the head of Volunteering Hawkes Bay, Renata Lehman. In addition good systems of training and support that integrate volunteers with the paid workforce help to ensure that the volunteer’s experience is good and their contribution to the organisation is positive.

NZCCSS reported at the conference on the work it has been doing to find ways to enhance the place of Christian social services as “employers of choice” in the sector. It is not about doubling up on the multiple strands of work happening in the sector, says policy Advisor Paul Barber, but rather to find those points of difference that mark out our organisations as good places to work. Some aspects of that work include pursuing options for sharing experience about successful retention strategies, job-sizing the home support coordinator role to ensure it reflects a reasonable workload and level of responsibility and sharing international recruitment work. NZCCSS will use its networking role to encourage organisations to build that sense of being employers who “go the extra mile” for their employees.

Ask yourself “Why” three times – concepts and tools to change the world

Stepping in as a replacement for last-minute programme changes was an additional challenge for local Presbyterian Support CEO Shaun Robinson. Leadership in a changing landscape was the topic and he reminded the workshop about the difference between leadership and management, central to which is developing vision and purpose for organisations. Asking “why” of our vision drives us down to look behind the initial statements to see what is really going on, what is really driving us in our work.

Weaving a new approach to conference: Mary-Alice Arthur



The decision to change from a single motivational speaker to instead employing a motivational presence throughout the whole conference was thoroughly vindicated. Self-designated “conference weaver” Mary-Alice Arthur guided the two days of conference sessions with a good-humoured and inspirational tone.

She facilitated World Café sessions, table discussions, interactive keynote panel, a poster session, and a final story-telling

session that all combined to ensure that all participants had ample opportunity for quality networking and discussion, for their issues to be incorporated and the keynote speakers to be fully engaged.

Fun and celebration!!

The wonderful welcome and great food at Waipatu Marae to open the conference was followed on the Thursday evening with drinks at the waterfront bistro at Ahuriri and a fantastic banquet meal at the Conference Centre.



The entertainment provided by comedians and musicians Chris and Chet included hilarious Elvis impersonations during which the talents of some conference participants were discovered!



Thank you to our Sponsors and Exhibitors

This year’s conference was supported by a range of sponsors and trade exhibitors. The growing importance of information technology saw several firms involved in various aspects of IT in services for older people represented. An internet café set up by Designer Technology in the conference hall was a live link for many to keep up the electronic side of their work even while at the conference.

Conference partner sponsors Programmed Maintenance Services and Quality Health significantly contributed to bringing keynote speaker Dr Satya Brink to NZ as did sector ITO Careerforce with Lin Hatfield Dodds.

NZCCSS is grateful to all the trade exhibitors who contributed to the conference success and helped encourage our members to keep up with latest developments in services, products and technology.

Conference Programme and presentations available online at the NZCCSS website:

www.nzccss.org.nz/site/page.php?page_id=49
and
www.nzccss.org.nz/site/searchpub.php

NZCCSS TAKES ACTION IN 2008

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In 2008 the work of the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) is being focused around the launch and development of **Aroha tētahi ki tētahi - Let Us Look After Each Other** - a programme of information that makes a call for action to achieve a more just and compassionate society. This new programme was launched in March 2008.

During the next few months NZCCSS will release a series of information and discussion leaflets on each of the five key messages of the Let Us Look After Each Other programme. In June a leaflet will be distributed discussing the call to provide older people with a range of choices for their homes, support and lifestyle.

Information about **Aroha tētahi ki tētahi - Let Us Look After Each Other** can be found at the NZCCSS website, which can be accessed at both www.nzccss.org.nz and www.justiceandcompassion.org.nz

SOP POLICY GROUP

NZCCSS' Services for Older People Policy Group comprises:

Michael Greer - Convenor
(Christchurch Methodist Mission)

John Baird (Alexander Consulting, Auckland)

Gillian Bremner (Presbyterian Support Otago)

David Hanna (Wesley Community Action, Wellington)

Shirley Hennessy (Home of St Barnabas Trust, Dunedin)

Judy Hindrup (Assisi Home and Hospital, Hamilton)

Jane Kerr-Bell (Salvation Army Homecare, Hamilton)

Duncan Macdonald (The Selwyn Foundation)

Val Sugrue (Howick Baptist Healthcare, Auckland)

COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS

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THANK YOU

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Justice and Compassion in Action!

Let Us Look After Each Other

Aroha tētahi ki tētahi

We believe a just and compassionate society can be achieved by more action to:

Support families and communities in nurturing and protecting our children as taonga.

Provide older people with a range of choices for their homes, support and lifestyle.

Utilise our nation's prosperity responsibly to eliminate poverty.

Enable access to good, affordable housing for everyone.

Support community-based organisations to grow the spirit of aroha tetahi ki tetahi - looking after each other.

