

## FOREWORD

This 20th issue of the Social Policy Journal of New Zealand, marking a decade of publication, is devoted to the Social Policy Research and Evaluation Conference convened by the Ministry of Social Development on 29-30 April 2003. The theme of the conference was the incorporation of research and evaluation into evidence-based policy and service delivery. In this issue we have compiled keynote addresses from the plenary sessions of the conference and a selection of papers based on presentations to the parallel sessions.

Regular readers of the journal will note that this is easily the longest issue published to date. Nevertheless, as those of you who attended the conference know, a single volume can provide only a sampling of what was presented there. In the next two issues we plan to published more papers developed from conference presentations, and I can assure you that there is some exceptional work yet to come.

The five keynote speakers whose addresses are included here – Dame Anne Salmond, David Ellwood, Sandra Nutley, Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Taisi Efi and David Zussman – took broad-based approaches to the issues of developing evidence-based policy. Their perspectives were grounded in the cultural and political contexts of their experiences as academics and policy advisers in their respective nations: New Zealand, the United States, the United Kingdom, Samoa and Canada.

David Ellwood focuses on events during the period of his work on American welfare reform within the administration of President Bill Clinton. Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Taisi Efi, a former Prime Minister of (then) Western Samoa, has the added experience of having been a policy maker, and in his paper he argues the need for understanding the significance of nuance and allusion in Samoan culture in order to produce effective policy for Samoans. Dame Anne Salmond explores the areas of New Zealand life that would most benefit from evidence-based policy; Sandra Nutley identifies the requirements for improving the use of evidence; and David Zussman illustrates the challenges and problems of integrating evidence into the decision-making process with examples from Canada.

The other papers in this issue, written by contributors from central and local government, the community, and the academic and private sectors, should give a flavour of the range of presentations made to the conference.

Two papers highlight the work of the Ministry of Social Development. John Jensen, Vasantha Krishnan, Matt Spittal and Sathi Sathiyandra summarise some of the findings of the Living Standards programme of research. (Measures used in this research were developed in a previous paper in Issue 19.) Ross Mackay reviews the international research literature on

family resilience, part of the Family Dynamics research programme, exploring the factors that influence how families manage to cope with adversity.

Susan G. Singley and Paul Callister examine work-rich and work-poor households in New Zealand, and compare patterns here with those found in the United Kingdom and the United States. Focusing on the ageing of New Zealand's workforce, Judith Davey argues for the need to maximise the potential of older workers, and explores patterns of educational participation in mid- and later life.

In a paper that is itself a product of partnership between local government and the academy, Wendy Lerner of the University of Auckland and Tony Mayow of the Waitakere City Council discuss the realities of local partnerships in public good research projects. Their paper focuses on stakeholder relationships and roles, funding and institutional culture.

The New Zealand Poverty Measurement Project is another partnership, this time combining the resources of the community, the university and a private-sector research company. It provided the data for an assessment by Charles Waldegrave, Robert Stephens and Peter King of the effectiveness in reducing poverty of five current central government policy initiatives. Also addressing the role of central government in alleviating poverty, Robert Stephens compares the scope and generosity of family assistance in New Zealand to that of 17 other OECD nations. (The paper is a 10-year follow-up study of an earlier comparison written with Jonathan Bradshaw that was published in Issue 4.)

I think that you will find this issue of the Journal to be a useful compilation of papers developed from the addresses and presentations offered at the Social Policy Research and Evaluation Conference. The proceedings of the conference, providing the papers and overheads as they were presented, may be found on the Ministry of Social Development website ([www.msd.govt.nz](http://www.msd.govt.nz)) under "cross-sectoral work". Finally, don't forget that the next issue of the Journal will feature further papers based on the conference work, and the next Social Policy Research and Evaluation Conference is already planned for 2005.



Nicholas Pole  
General Manager  
Centre for Social Research and Evaluation  
Te Pokapū Rangahau Arotake Hapori