

## *FOREWORD*

Issue 29 addresses a broad range of social sector topics, including health, education, child protection, and welfare benefits, as well as overarching issues of knowledge, research and evaluation.

Health impact assessment is a major theme of this issue, drawing on several papers based on presentations to the conference held in Wellington earlier this year. The paper by Louise Signal, Barbara Langford, Rob Quigley and Martin Ward is about embedding health impact assessment at the policy level. It is supported by two case studies of policy-level health impact assessment: one, by Anna Stevenson, Karen Banwell and Ramon Pink, is about the Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy; and the other, by Robert Quigley and Shyrel Burt, is on urban planning in Avondale, a suburb of Auckland City. A review of the conference by Louise Thornley rounds off this set of papers.

In keeping with the theme of assessing the impact of policy, Kirsten Hanna, Ian Hassall and Emma Davies argue for the value of incorporating child impact assessment into the policy process. They discuss overseas experience with child impact reporting and make some comparisons with health impact assessment with respect to participation issues and implementation.

The theme of Māori knowledge is represented by two papers in this issue. Helen Moewaka Barnes discusses the problems inherent in dichotomising western and Māori knowledge. Her paper looks at the role that our institutions should be playing in supporting the engagement of Māori in innovation and the way such engagement may challenge the power dynamics within these institutions. The paper by Rhys Jones, Sue Crengle and Tim McCreanor provides a case study of kaupapa Māori research on men's health, and demonstrates the way in which traditional Māori values and concepts shaped the research.

Three papers present the findings of a programme of research around Sickness and Invalid's Benefits carried out by the Centre for Social Research and Evaluation (CSRE) in the Ministry of Social Development. Penny Beynon and Sarah Tucker summarise the findings from several studies exploring issues related to employment and benefit receipt for people with ill health and disability. Keith McLeod and Penny Beynon describe their methodology for developing clusters of clients receiving Sickness and Invalid's Benefits, to better understand the diversity of experiences of people receiving these benefits. Moira Wilson and Keith McLeod report on their analysis of benefit dynamics data to explain patterns of growth in the numbers of clients receiving Sickness and Invalid's Benefits.

Freda Briggs reports on the findings of her research with special education students, which combines qualitative and quantitative methods. Her study confirms the vulnerability of these children to the risks of drugs, violence, psychological bullying, pornography and sexual abuse.

The conference reviews in this issue cover feminist economics and evaluation, as well as the review of the 2006 Health Impact Assessment Conference. Maire Dwyer attended the 15th annual conference of the International Association for Feminist Economics at the University of Sydney and reflects on the themes that emerged. The third Aotearoa New Zealand National Evaluation Conference was in Taupo, again, and several participants (Joseph Schumacher, Debi Majumdar, Christina Howard, Geoff Stone and Salena Davie) have joined in a report on the sessions and on the emergence of the Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association.

I hope you enjoy this issue of the *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*.



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