

FOREWORD

A major theme for Issue 32 of the *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand* is culture and ethnicity, and this theme is covered over a broad range of social policy areas: health, education, welfare, child protection, migration, community initiatives, Pasifika research and Māori knowledge. The authors of Issue 32 provide a wide spectrum of voices, representing universities from New Zealand, Sweden and America, government agencies, local bodies, community groups, students and the private sector.

We are very pleased that Joakim Palme, one of the keynote speakers at the Social Policy Research and Evaluation Conference earlier this year, has written a paper for the journal that encompasses and develops the issues raised in his well-received presentation. His article explores the recent challenges to the welfare state and some options for sustainable solutions.

Emily Keddell addresses our culture and ethnicity theme explicitly as she discusses the requirement in the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989 to maintain a child's cultural identity if they need to be placed in foster care. She delves into the complexities of defining cultural identity and the implications for social work practice.

The topic of ethnicity is taken up again by Paul Callister, Robert Didham, Jamie Newell and Deborah Potter, who explore the problems that emerge from the concept of "family ethnicity" – their clever title says it all. It is a timely paper, given the current review by Statistics New Zealand of family statistics.

Two papers on health matters cover very different aspects of the health system. Mark Booth and Vince Mor provide a discussion of how long-term care for older people works in the United States and compare this to care in New Zealand. The paper by Wendy Henwood describes the findings of her formative evaluation of a community programme that uses Māori culture as a basis for encouraging good nutrition and regular physical exercise in five Māori communities.

Community-level initiatives are also the focus of papers dealing with education and safety respectively. Robyn Munford, Jackie Sanders, Bruce Maden and Elizabeth Maden describe a community group that over a decade merged a playgroup and a counselling service into a fully developed community centre and licensed early childhood centre, and how this was affected by government policy. In response, the Ministry of Education overviews early childhood education policy. In the safety arena, Carolyn Coggan and Laurie Gabites discuss how Wellington City Council went about meeting the six criteria required for attaining the status of a Safe Community of the World Health Organisation network.

At the tertiary end of the education spectrum, a group of Pasifika students at Auckland University of Technology took a face-to-face approach to getting their lecturers to address the problems they were having succeeding as university students. In their article, Camille Nakhid, a senior lecturer at AUT, with students John Paul Fa'alogo, Meiolandre Faiava, Daisy Halafihi, Sam Pilisi, John Senio, Sidney Taylor and Luke Thomas, explain how they developed their tactics into a research approach that draws on elements of their cultures.

Five authors, representing two universities and two government agencies, have contributed an article that explores patterns of Asian migration to New Zealand. Juthika Badkar, Paul Callister, Vasantha Krishnan, Robert Didham and Richard Bedford find that gender ratios vary significantly by nation of origin, and that women are of increasing importance as skilled immigrants. They use their analysis of gender, age, country of origin and migration stream to reveal the complexity of this part of our developing workforce.

We are pleased to include two book reviews in this issue. John Angus weighs the strengths (he says they are considerable) of *Restructuring Family Policies: Convergences and Divergences* by Maureen Baker. Ann Pomeroy assesses Jo Cribb's *Being Accountable: Voluntary Organisations, Government Agencies and Contracted Social Services in New Zealand* as "an excellent and enlightening read", finding useful links to her own work with integrated contracts under the Government's Funding for Outcomes programme.

The breadth of topics and voices ensures that Issue 32 will have something for everyone with an interest in social policy. I hope that you find this whole issue to be an excellent and enlightening read.



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