

## FOREWORD

Issue 35 of the Social Policy Journal of New Zealand is devoted to research funded by the New Zealand Families Commission. The papers cover a range of topics: demography, partnership issues, economics, employment, childcare, parenting, culture, Pasifika families, youth gangs, migrant families, familial relationships, older people and family violence.

Jan Pryor, Chief Commissioner introduces Issue 35 with an essay on the place of the family in the government policy arena. This is followed by three papers that contextualize the New Zealand family in history, at the local government level, and in the economy. Jo Cribb discusses the demographic and structural changes in the New Zealand family over the last 60 years and some projections into the future. The paper by Francis Luketina is an account of partnership work with local bodies to support family-centred communities. Family indebtedness is the focus of a paper by Jaimie Legge and Anne Heynes that attempts to identify what sorts of families are most likely to get into debt.

Several papers address the ways in which parents' employment impinges on family life – the issue of work/life balance. Lindy Fursman and Nita Zodgekar discuss the findings of their research into flexible working arrangements. The focus of Lindy Fursman's article is long working hours and the impact on families with at least one partner working long hours. A qualitative study of how parents with non-standard working hours manage to arrange childcare for their very young children is the topic of Janine Moss's paper.

Pasifika families are the focus of group of papers that explore, respectively, housing, wellbeing and youth gangs. Gina Pene, Marisa Peita and Philippa Howden-Chapman spoke to young Tokelauans about living in extended family households. The article by Gerard Cotterell, Martin von Randow and Stephen McTaggart analyses Census data to describe wellbeing over time for New Zealand's Samoan, Cook Island, Tokelau and Niuean communities. In-depth research with young Pasifika gang members in South Auckland allows Camille Nakhid to delve into their perceptions of their homes and families and how they are influenced by their gang membership.

Parenting is another important sub-theme for this issue. Jeremy Robertson, Jan Pryor and Janine Moss discuss the findings of their qualitative study of how separating couples are able to make their own arrangements for the care of their children without recourse to the Family Court. Migrant and refugee families are the focus of the article by Sara Kindon and Anne Broome, who discuss the challenges of studying these families in the course of researching their use of early childhood care and education.

Two papers discussed research into special services for families. Carla Guy describes her research on the use of several types of relationship support, ranging from the informal support given by families and friends to the use of professional help. Kathryn Peri, Janet Fanslow, Jennifer Hand and John Parsons contribute a paper on their qualitative research with older people and other stakeholders on the topic of preventing elder abuse and neglect.

This special issue on Families Commission research also include two book reviews. Len Cook (now the independent chair of Government's cross-agency Social Policy Evaluation and Research Committee) discusses *The New Zealand Family from 1840: A Demographic History* by Ian Pool, Arunachalam Dharamlingham and Janet Sceats. Finally, Jan Rodwell reviews *Children in Changing Families* by Jan Pryor and Bryan Rodgers.

I hope you find this special issue of the Social Policy Journal of New Zealand to be informative and rewarding.

Don Gray  
Deputy Chief Executive  
Social Sector Strategy