



He aha te mea nui o te ao?
Maku e kii atu,
he tangata, he tangata, he
tangata
*What is the most precious
thing in this world? I tell
you this, it is people, it is
people, it is people*

**FREE LEGAL
ADVICE**
for those most in need
Walk in Legal Clinics
1A Trading Place,
Henderson
Mon - Thurs
9.30am - 11am
No appt necessary
Northcote CAB, Ernie Mays
Street, Northcote
Mondays 10am - 1pm
FREE INFO LINE
0800 529 463
Mon - Thurs
1.30pm - 3.30pm

**TENANCY TRIBUNAL
APPLICATIONS**
The Department of Building and Housing at 295 Lincoln Road, Henderson, HAS NOW CLOSED. Tenancy Tribunal applications need to be faxed directly to Wellington, using the number on the application form. Walk-in services only available at Auckland and Manukau offices

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!
Buyer Beware: If you buy from a private individual and the item breaks down, you do not have any rights to a refund unless the seller misrepresented to you the nature of the goods.

YOUTH & JUSTICE

An unmet legal need

An integral aspect of WCLS operations is to identify the unmet legal need in the Community. Community consultation, especially amongst Maori and Pasifika organisations identified that the unmet legal need of youth in Waitakere was a key issue. Recently, WCLS delivered legal education workshop with a group of young people in Waitakere. While engaging with these young people, it was evident

that this group of young people had quite a negative perception of the police. Furthermore, research undertaken by Youth Law highlighted that young people in Waitakere had a worse perception of police, than in South Auckland.

Whilst, WCLS acknowledge there are various factors which inform young peoples perceptions, WCLS initiated a local research project to test whether this perception was still relevant, and what informed these perceptions. Similarly, we also wanted to ask youth about their positive experiences, and what made it positive. This question was particularly important, as the aim of our research was to identify strategies to raise the profile and perception of police amongst young people in



Jeremy Brockman, Bachelor of Social Practice 2nd year student, currently undertaking research with WCLS.

Waitakere.

It is envisaged that once the research is completed, WCLS will host a community forum for key stakeholders to outline the findings of our research project. It is hoped that a collaborative approach which includes young people will enable us to identify strategies to raise a more positive perception of the police, and address the unmet legal needs of young people in Waitakere. If you are interested in contributing to this research and taking a collaborative approach to addressing the unmet legal needs of young people in our community, please contact Paula on 8352130 or email paula@waitakerelaw.org.nz

Paula Bold-Wilson, BSocP (Community



The work of the WCLS is underpinned by volunteer law students. These are primarily drawn from Auckland University's Equal Justice Project. This is a student run, not for profit organisation working to promote access to justice in Auckland. Contact EJP: directors@equaljustice.co.nz

Social Assistance (Future Focus) Bill - WCLS Submission

WCLS is very concerned about the negative effect this Bill will have on our most vulnerable people. We recently wrote a submission to government about it.

The Government says the Bill is “*A fairer system for social assistance*” and that the main objective is to ensure a fairer system of social assistance with an “unrelenting focus on work”. This will be achieved by—

- requiring people receiving certain benefits who can work to seek and accept offers of suitable work as a first priority;
- providing financial support that reflects the individual’s circumstances and needs;
- providing for the CPI adjustment of social assistance rates in legislation.

The Government states that underlying the proposed changes are three key aims. These are to—

- get people back to work as soon as possible:

- reduce dependency on the benefit system;
- make it clear that people who receive support from the State are expected to meet certain obligations.

WCLS Submission

WCLS believes that if this Bill is not amended then it will fail to bring about social and economic well-being to many and will increase negative down stream affects, such as crime, illiteracy, and poverty.

By focussing on individuals and their capacity to work, the Bill fails to take adequate account of the wider social and economic needs of that individual. It also fails to take into account the needs of the whanau and the whanau’s ability to support the individual into work.

The Bill should require organisations such as WINZ to take into account the wider needs and capacity of the individual and whanau when requiring someone to work.

The Bill exposes more people to risks of poor government decision making. It puts unreasonable demands on vulnerable people and exposes them – children, single parents, the sick, and victims of violence – to further harm. The very real fact is that poor administrative decisions will be made, and the Bill will deliver hardship to the victims of those decisions.

The Bill should provide for further checks and safeguards around decision making to ensure those most vulnerable are not the victims of poor decisions, and their circumstances are not aggravated by those poor decisions.

The Bill’s “*unrelenting focus on work*” is too narrow. WCLS urges the Government to slow the path of this legislation, broaden its scope of its enquiry and to take a long-term whole of government approach to raising social and economic well-being.

Darryn Aitchison, Senior Lawyer

GET IT OFF YOUR CHEST!

Isn't it interesting that when the government decides to make cut backs, they focus on those that are already extremely vulnerable in our community? The media coverage around the social assistance bill reinforced dominant discourses that everyone on the benefit chooses to be on the benefit! In fact, this piece of legislation made a whole lot of assumptions... it assumed that there were a surplus of jobs available and yet, we continue to see a rise in unemployment. It assumed that all solo parents and those on the sick benefit choose to bring their children up on their own, or that people want to be unwell. It assumed that youth were able to find employment in this competitive market, and that the minimum wage was enough to live on. Then to make matters worse, the government decides to increase GST with those on high income receiving the greatest

benefits. These political decisions reinforces that neo-liberalism is alive and well in Aotearoa. While much of the spotlight is on individual responsibility and the notion that people have choices, it distracts us from addressing the underlying issue of poverty, which exists in Aotearoa. Honestly, have we become too scared to acknowledge that poverty exists in this country, or has the issue of poverty become so big, it's too overwhelming?

If we are serious about addressing the socio-economic wellbeing of individuals and their whanau, then government needs to stop perpetuating poverty through political decisions such as the social assistance bill and focus more on addressing issues of poverty, quality housing, education, greater job opportunities, fair working conditions and increasing the minimum wage. *Paula Bold-Wilson, Manager*

OUR SERVICES

Legal Information, advice and assistance. - this includes:

- Writing letters and phoning
- Drafting and witnessing official documents
- Negotiation and mediation

Community Mediation project where clients are offered free mediation services by a LEADR accredited mediator to resolve legal disputes.

Legal Education

Legal education can be delivered to organisations and the public.

OUR STAFF

WCLS employs: a Manager, 4 Lawyers (1 f/t and 3 p/t), p/t Projects Officer, an Office Coordinator, p/t Tenancy Advocacy Service Co-ordinator & a p/t Legal Education Coordinator.