

Key Findings

FEBRUARY 2019

The Welfare Expert Advisory Group have completed their review of New Zealand's welfare system and our findings are contained in the report – *Whakamana Tāngata – Restoring Dignity to Social Security in New Zealand*.

In summary we have found:

- The welfare system is no longer fit for purpose and needs fundamental change – this will be difficult and take time as it is a large and extremely complex system.
- Anyone can need to rely on the social security system at some point in their lives – when people are of working age this is often due to unavoidable 'life shocks' such as relationship break-downs, illness, or redundancy.
- Some people are more impacted than others e.g. disabled, those with serious health conditions, those living on their own, Māori, youth and Pacific people. Often these are associated with long-term and deeply embedded poverty and lack of opportunity.
- We must improve the wellbeing of all people in the social security system, and should be particularly mindful of the impacts on children and young people.
- There are too many New Zealanders leading desperate lives with seriously inadequate incomes. We must increase their incomes substantially and reduce the barriers to access.
- Housing is an unsustainable expense – there is an urgent need for housing options for low-income people. This includes building more state housing and investing in other home ownership and tenure options.
- Our employment system is not well-placed to help people into work now or in the future, and we invest too little in supporting people to find and retain work.
- People with health conditions and disabilities, and the people caring for them, are generally not well-supported and can face unfair differences in support provided by different agencies.
- We need to value people's contribution to more than paid work e.g. caring for children, disabled, elderly, volunteer work for community organisations or cultural and creative enterprises.
- What happens in health, justice, labour market, housing has a big impact on social security and is in turn, impacted by what is happening in social security.
- We need a longer-term approach to social security to make substantive changes that benefit New Zealand and people who need this support.
- At the heart of the change is a more positive attitude towards those who need this help. Treat them with dignity and respect.



LEARN MORE:

Download the *Whakamana Tāngata – Restoring Dignity to Social Security in New Zealand* report, and the Executive Summary in English and Te Reo Māori at www.weag.govt.nz

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