

TOWARDS A CODE OF SOCIAL AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY

THE RESPONSE REPORT

**THE RESPONSE ANALYSIS TEAM
1998**

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Most common theme/ Most frequently mentioned:	Theme mentioned, in response to a particular question, more often than any other but less than fifty percent (i.e. where there was not a majority view).
At least 10%:	Mentioned in at least ten percent of responses to a particular question.
Up to 10%:	Mentioned in less than ten percent of responses to a particular question but more than most others.

Expectations and status of the proposed code

A majority of respondents indicated *Support*² for the expectations while providing considerable commentary and caveats. The most notable additions suggested related to specifying roles and responsibilities for government in relation to the expectations. However, no clear picture emerged from responses regarding the status of the proposed code.

Issues

Each of the eleven issues raised is reported separately. The answers to the specific questions asked under each issue are also reported separately with regard to frequencies, but with qualitative comment amalgamated together to give an overall response to each issue. The key points to emerge on each issue are as follows:

Looking after our children

In response to the question on steps that can be taken to encourage good parenting and help solve the problem of child abuse and neglect, the most frequently mentioned steps concerned *Education*. Similarly, on what could be done to send the message that everybody shares responsibility for helping to protect children, *Educate/Promote* was mentioned more than all other strategies combined.

The range of comment included references to: education, leadership; suggested changes in approach; the needs of parents, children and teenagers; employment issues; improving parenting; providing support; funding; income issues; legal and justice issues; cultural and spiritual issues; Maori issues; sanctions and punishments; and advertising and promotion.

² The words in italics denote coding options provided on the coding sheet - for more detail see section on "Methodology".

Pregnancy care

On the question of what we can all do to encourage pregnant women to seek early pregnancy care, at least 10% of responses mentioned actions related to *Education, Health* and *Funding*, changes in *Attitude/Approach* and/or *Availability*. On the question of whether the government should use the contact it has with women receiving pregnancy-related sickness benefit to encourage good care during pregnancy, a majority of responses agreed that government should use its contact to encourage good pregnancy care.

The range of comment included references to: role of government; pregnancy prevention; abortion; availability of and access to services; alternative medical and non-medical approaches; advertising and promotion; incentives; sanctions and punishments; Maori issues; and doing nothing.

Keeping children healthy

On the question of what more we can all do to make sure all young children receive immunisations and child health checks, the most frequently mentioned actions related to *Health*, and up to 10% of responses mentioned *Funding*. In relation to whether Income Support should encourage beneficiary parents to take their children for immunisations and child health checks, there was no majority view, but the most common theme was *Yes* (that Income Support should do this). However at least 10% disagreed, and up to 10% gave qualifications. On the question of whether up-to-date immunisations should be required for entry to early childhood education services and schools, a majority agreed that they should be. However, at least 10% did not agree and up to 10% gave qualifications.

The range of comment on immunisation included references to: need for research and better information; inconsistency of messages; adverse events following immunisation; compulsion; proposed exemptions; role of Income Support Service; educative approaches; support services; and advertising and promotion.

The range of comment on child health checks included references to: educative approaches; role of government; incentives; breastfeeding; the role of Plunket and other support agencies; sanctions and punishments; role of the community and churches; Maori issues; and personal experiences.

On this particular issue it is important to note that the compound nature of the question posed some analysis problems and it was not always possible to distinguish between comments on immunisation and comments on child health checks.

Learning for the under 5s

On the question of how Government can encourage parents and other family members to support their children's learning, *Educate/Promote* was mentioned more frequently than all other strategies combined. There was no majority view on the question of what we can all do to support children's learning in the earlier years, but the most common theme related to *Education*. On the question of whether parent support and education should be targeted more to families with the greatest needs and if so, how it should be done, the majority of responses did not answer the first question. Of those that did, most agreed that it should be targeted. At least 10% of responses disagreed. No clear picture emerged concerning strategies.

The range of comment included references to: role of government; funding; role of the media (particularly television); support for programmes and services; role of the churches, spirituality and the family and community; legal and justice issues; targeting; employment and income issues; issues for Maori and Pacific Islands people; and suggestions of taking no action on this issue.

Getting children to school ready to learn

On the question of what we can all do to help see that children attend school well prepared and ready to learn, most mentioned action related to *Education*. On the question of what else the government can do to make sure that children regularly attend school; eg should parents who receive a benefit be required, as a condition of benefit, to get their children to school, a majority of the responses said *Yes*. At least 10% of responses gave reasons and up to 10% of responses gave qualifications.

The range of comment included references to: role of the community; roles of parents and children; role of government; legal and justice issues including sanctions and punishments; targeting; deal with bullying; additional problems identified; proposals related to pre-school preparation; supporting children already at school; partnership between parents and schools; truancy officers; support needed to facilitate change; getting enough sleep; and supporting other cultures, including issues for Maori.

Young offenders

There was no majority view on the question of how far parents should be held responsible for the actions of their children. However, the most common theme indicated that parents should be held *Completely* responsible. There was also no majority view among responses specifying an age limit. However, *up to 16* years of age was mentioned most frequently. On the question of whether the courts should have the power to make parents set curfews or attend parenting courses, a clear majority said *Yes*. At least 10% said *No* and up to 10% of responses gave reasons and qualifications. On the question of whether the age at which children can be prosecuted in Court for an offence should be lowered and if so to what age, the majority of responses said *Yes*. At least 10% of responses said *No* and up to 10% of

responses gave reasons and qualifications. Among those specifying an age there was no majority view. However, 10-12 was mentioned most frequently.

The range of comment included references to: suggested extent of parental responsibility; role of government; suggested support; positive and negative views and qualifications regarding curfews; ideas related to parenting courses; opposition to parenting courses; and prevention, restitution, punishment, sanctions, and funding relating to lowering the age of prosecution.

Sharing parenthood

There was no majority view on the question of what more we can all do to encourage fathers to play a more active part in bringing up their children. However, the most common theme related to changes in *Attitude/Approach*. On the question of what more can be done to support the rights of the child to have regular contact with both parents (when separated) there was also no majority view. The most common themes related to changes in *Attitude/Approach* and changes to the *Legal/Justice* system. On the question of what else the government should do to reinforce the responsibility of parents not living with their children to support them financially, *Income* was mentioned more frequently than all other strategies combined, with the exception of changes to the *Legal/Justice* system which was mentioned by up to 10% of responses.

The range of comment included references to: concern over safety; keeping families intact; ameliorating separation difficulties; payment of child support; sanctions and punishment; employers and employment; education; legal, justice and associated support services; role of government; role of men; role of the family and community; ideas for supporting fathers' involvement; and settings.

Training and learning for employment

On the question of what the government and taxpayer should expect in return for funding a person to do further education or training, *Paid work/seek paid work* was mentioned more frequently than all other suggestions combined. There was no majority view on the question of what groups of working age beneficiaries should be required to accept training opportunities. However, most responses mentioned *All working age beneficiaries*. The *Age group* mentioned most frequently was those *up to 50 years of age*. Exceptions mentioned most frequently were *Not with young children* and *Unless incapacitated*.

The range of comment included references to: responsibilities of trainees; voluntary and community work; reimbursing government and bonding; targeting categories of beneficiary; targeting issues; younger, middle-aged and older beneficiaries; Domestic Purposes, Sickness, Invalid and Unemployed beneficiaries; widows; exceptions; education and student loans; and suggestions of taking no action on this issue.

Work obligations and income support

There was no majority view on the question of what more the government can do to encourage beneficiaries into work. The most common theme in responses related to *Employment*. On the question of whether it was fair to expect a working age beneficiary to take up part-time or full-time work or training when they have the ability to do so, a clear majority said *Yes*. Up to 10% of responses gave reasons and at least 10% of responses made qualifying statements. On the question of whether a person on a benefit long-term who cannot take up part-time or full-time work should be encouraged to do things such as community service, a clear majority said *Yes*. At least 10% of responses said *No*. Up to 10% of responses gave reasons and at least 10% of responses made qualifying statements.

The range of comment included references to: role of government; fairness; Maori issues; targeting specific groups; support for specific programmes; legal and justice issues; income and abatement regimes; support for beneficiaries; controlling benefit abuse; advertising and promotion; and specific concerns noted.

Managing money

On the question of whether people who repeatedly seek emergency income support should be made to have free budget advice, and if so at what point, a majority of responses *Yes* and indicated the 1st, 2nd or 3rd time emergency support was sought. On the question of whether the Government should provide services to manage people's budgets, if so under what circumstances, and whether the benefit should be paid through a money manager until the problem is sorted out, the majority of responses said *Yes*. At least 10% of responses said *No*. Up to 10% of responses gave reasons and qualifying statements.

The range of comment included references to: insufficient income; role of government; intervention levels; improving support services; difficulties; information issues; alternative suggestions; and sanctions and punishments.

Keeping ourselves healthy

There was no majority view on the question of what else the government can do to encourage people not to smoke, to eat healthier food, to exercise more and use alcohol only in moderation. However, at least 10% of responses mentioned *Education* and *Health* in terms of what needed to be done. *Educate/Promote*, *Sanctions/Conditions* and *Do nothing* were mentioned most frequently by those who offered strategies.

The range of comment included references to: role of government; specific proposals; support for services; targeting; issues for Maori; issues for the churches and spirituality; role of the community and community focused suggestions; and sanctions and punishments.

There was no majority view on the question of what we can all do to make sure that people with early symptoms of psychological problems seek help. The most frequently mentioned actions related to *Health*.

The range of comment included references to: role of the government; practical support from government; funding; role of the community; role of the media; role of parents; role of the churches and spirituality; improving the reporting processes; support for families and employers and employment.

Sub-population analysis

The results of the tick and text data responses were tabulated against the demographic data to see whether there were any notable³ differences in responses from different demographic groups. The first point to note is that the size of all sub-populations⁴ is small⁵ in comparison to the total respondent population and the following comments need to be taken in that context. Also, there was no notable difference between the results by gender and the respondent population as a whole, or between genders. However, there were notable differences between results from the sub-populations and the respondent population as a whole in about half of the questions on the response form. These differences were most marked in responses from the “group” category. Responses from this category on closed questions tended to go in the opposite direction from responses from other sub-populations and from the respondent population as a whole. The proportion of negative “group” responses was notably higher than from other sub-populations and the respondent population as a whole.

NZ Asian respondents were more supportive of the expectations and a legal approach to a code than the respondent population as a whole. A wider gap was evident between the responses of NZ Asian respondents and the NZ Maori, and NZ Pacific Islands respondents, both of whom tended to be more negative than the respondent population as a whole.

Over-arching themes

Overall, what comes across most strongly is the diversity of responses and associated ideas and views. In considering prevalent themes, responses favoured roles for government in achieving the expectations and also appeared to favour an educative rather than a legislative or sanctions-based approach.

³ Notable is defined as a difference of 10% or more.

⁴ Sub-populations comprise individual/household/group, gender, age and ethnicity.

⁵ For example most ethnic groups, with the exception of NZ European (68%) and NZ Maori (7%) were around 2/3%.

Conclusion

The distribution of the discussion document and invitation to submit feedback has generated a wealth of information for policy analysts and researchers to consider. Placing to one side issues of data representativeness, one of the significant strengths of the consultation and data generation process followed has been that a wide range of relatively unmoderated views and ideas have been obtained direct from members of the public on a number of highly complex issues.

The data from this discussion process is somewhat similar to the output from a brainstorming session. As is the case with brainstorming, some of the ideas generated appear at first glance to be of limited merit. However, in each instance the originator of the idea had some linkage or connecting principle in mind, however tenuous, when suggesting the idea in relation to the problem they sought to resolve.

Certainly these ideas and views bear thinking about in terms of the degree to which they might pinpoint some lack of alignment in current policy - an issue that was raised by respondents. Respondents, often unaware of the myriad of considerations and constraints around the development and implementation of policy, have suggested connections that may seem naive in their simplicity. However, instead of “throwing the baby out with the bath water” and rejecting such ideas in total, analysts have a unique opportunity to explore both the explicit *and* implicit relationships, linkages or connecting principles which lie within the data.

INTRODUCTION

In February 1998 the Government released a public discussion document *Towards a Code of Social and Family Responsibility*. The Government's primary objective in doing this was to promote public debate on the responsibilities of individuals and families and explore the possibility of having a Code of Social and Family Responsibility for New Zealand.

The Government provided a process whereby people could feedback their opinions and ideas on the issues raised in the discussion document and the idea of having a code. This report describes the content of the 94,303 responses received by the Government by the closing date of 8 May 1998⁶

This report contains the opinions and ideas of a self-selected group comprising many thousands of New Zealanders. It is the essential thrust of what they had to say that has come through the necessary summarising process rather than direct quotations.

The report contains summaries of the views of respondents on the expectations and status of the code and on each of the eleven issues, along with a broad indication of the weighting given; for example whether a "majority", or "about equal numbers of" respondents commented.

Information was collected and analysed for sub-populations of respondents. Where the views of these sub-populations (eg NZ Asian) are notably different from those of the responses as a whole, these are also described in this report.

What this report provides

- A description of the demographic information provided by respondents and the form of their response.
- An accurate reflection of the views of respondents as a whole as expressed in the responses on:
 - the set of "expectations" as a whole;
 - the potential status of the code; and
 - each of the eleven issues in the discussion document and the questions on each issue.
- An accurate reflection of the views, as expressed on the response form, of each respondent sub-population as they relate to the expectations, status of the code and eleven issues. These sub-populations comprise:

⁶ Those received within the first week after the closing date were included in the analysis. The remainder (402) have been kept for later analysis but are not included in this report because of time constraints.

- individuals, households, groups, age groups, gender groups and ethnic groups
- Identification of overarching themes that came through in the overall analysis.

What this report does not provide

- Any information that can be described as being representative of the general population of New Zealand.

What the report can be used for

- Feedback to New Zealanders on what was said by the 94,303 respondents as a whole and within sub-populations.
- To help inform policy development work on each of the eleven issues, the expectations and the status of the code.

What the report cannot be used for

- To describe the opinions and ideas of people who did not respond to the discussion document. Reporters and commentators will need to take care, when discussing the views expressed by respondents, that they do not use it as the basis for statements about the population as a whole.
- To describe current services or policies. A number of respondents appeared to lack information and understanding of the services people are entitled to. The views expressed and reported may not be factual and in most instances no attempt has been made to identify or correct them.

Additional information

Details of all responses are found in a separate, unpublished, data set. Details of the analysis process and the various instruments used are contained in a separate technical appendix.

BACKGROUND

1.4 million copies of the discussion document were printed. 1.339 million copies were distributed to households and box-holders in New Zealand. The remainder were made available to individuals and organisations seeking additional copies. People could access additional copies through a telephone hot-line, writing to the Department of Social Welfare or through the Internet.

The discussion document was also made available in the Maori, Samoan, Cook Islands Maori, Tongan and Chinese languages. Audio tapes were available for those with sight impairment and video tapes for those whose first language was sign language. The document was also published on the Internet.

An invitation to respond to the discussion document on a printed feedback sheet - with additional pages if necessary - was included with the discussion document along with a reply paid envelope. An additional folder containing fact sheets that elaborated on the information in the booklet was also made available on request.

Distribution started on 28 February and was largely complete by 13 March. The document did not become available in the non-English languages until 13 March and the audio and video tapes were available shortly after that. Approximately two months was allowed for feedback to be received with the original deadline being 24 April. However, this was later seen as being a little tight for certain groups to organise meetings and prepare joint responses and so the deadline was extended to 8 May.

METHODOLOGY

This section briefly outlines the processes followed to capture and analyse the feedback to the Government's discussion document *Towards a Code of Social and Family Responsibility*. A more detailed description of the principles, logic and processes can be found in the separate technical appendix.

Nature of the project

It is important to be clear that this exercise was not a survey and its findings therefore have no statistical validity. The process was similar to a submission process where a self-selected group of people responded to an issues document or report and where all views and ideas were considered equally, whether they came from one response or one hundred responses. Therefore, all responses were read and analysed.

Data collection and analysis

Two distinct types of data were received, requiring different processes for capture and analysis, ie "tick" and text. Tick data consisted of respondents' demographic details plus answers to closed questions which had been presented on the pre-printed response form with an accompanying tick circle. The text data consisted of all written answers to proffered questions as well as any supplementary material which was relevant, eg quotes, reports, or similar. Some text data was in response to quite specific closed questions for which no tick circle was provided.

Tick data

The tick circle data capture was straightforward, using high-speed scanning equipment to capture and record the data provided by respondents on their original response forms. It was then entered into a database for further analysis. Equivalent data from non-standard forms⁷ was entered into the response database manually.

Each individual tick response was stored in the database as an independent variable. This meant that because respondents were theoretically able to give almost any combination of 'yes' and 'no' answers or to identify any combination of demographic characteristics, eg 'male', 'age 25', 'ethnicity Maori' etc., any meaningful combination of these variables, with their corresponding frequencies, could be reported on.

Various quality control measures were undertaken to ensure data integrity. For example, in the event of a respondent ticking one circle and then crossing it out and ticking another, the scanner software alerted the operator to the situation and enabled a 'manual' decision on which tick should in fact be captured. Ultimately, a scanning

⁷ Non-standard forms included responses sent without an original response form and those printed in other languages.

accuracy rate of 99.9% was claimed by the scanning company⁸. Response Analysis Team checks supported this.

Text data

Unlike the tick data capture, the design and implementation of the text data capture and analysis process was complex. The process needed to accommodate:

- the very broad range of issues covered by respondents;
- the use of compound questions;
- the large number of responses; and
- time and cost constraints.

Following consultation with a wide range of experienced private and public sector social researchers⁹, a process was decided upon which incorporated both orthodox social research content analysis methodology¹⁰ and the use of scanning technology for data capture.

A small team of content analysts with considerable combined experience in qualitative research, and with broad backgrounds in social policy, worked with a sample of responses to finalise a set of themes and sub-themes for development into a standardised coding sheet¹¹. The coding sheet consisted of a series of optional statements, each with a corresponding tick box, which coders could use to code each response received according to the sentiments expressed by respondents. Rules were developed to enable coders to consistently understand and apply the coding frameworks.

A group of 80 suitably skilled people were recruited and trained to consistently apply the rules for interpreting and coding responses across the 94,303 received. In addition to ticking boxes on the coding sheet, they also wrote in a supplementary book any comments they came across that were not sufficiently reflected by the definitions provided in the coding regime.

The supplementary book was a vital part of the overall text data capture process. It contained the same questions as the pre-printed response sheet. It also included a number of examples, identified during the initial content analysis phase, that related to the boxes that coders could tick. Each coder had a book and used the same book throughout their coding, even if they coded several boxes of forms. There was considerable variation in the amount of data collected in these books. One reason for

⁸ Imaging Solutions Ltd.

⁹ A summary of people and organisations consulted is included in the technical appendix.

¹⁰ See Krippendorff, Klaus; *Content Analysis - An Introduction to its Methodology*, Sage Publications, London, 1980.

¹¹ Copies of the coding sheet, coding rules and supplementary book are included in the technical appendix.

this was the different nature of responses. For example, coding non-standard forms often generated more text for the supplementary book than standard response forms.

There were also a number of pre-printed forms, such as those supplied by the Council of Trade Unions, which only needed to have the pre-printed information captured in one book. All the supplementary books were aggregated into one composite document with duplications removed. The data was then considered, question by question, and the written statements were grouped together under the headings as they now appear in the comment section of the “Findings”. Choice of themes and headings was governed by the data. In certain cases the headings match those used in the coding sheet, but many are new reflecting additional themes that came through in the final analysis.

The quality control procedure for the text data involved double coding a sample of forms from each coder to establish the level of variability between coders. This was found to be about 10%, which was roughly what was expected for a number of reasons including the complexity of the questions and the number of coders required.¹²

In summary, the coding sheet was designed to identify and count the themes found in responses. The supplementary book was designed to capture the nuances and detail of respondents’ ideas and views.

Reporting

The frequency of the tick data received from respondents is reported in the “Findings” section of this report.

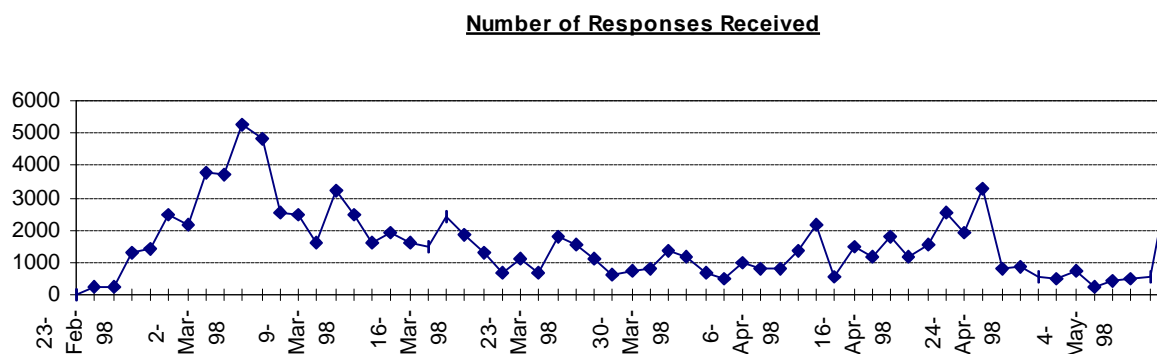
The text data is reported in two forms.

- Text data that was “counted,” ie responses coded onto the coding sheet and scanned, is discussed question by question.
- The commentary or response excerpts that came from coder’s supplementary books is reported in the comments section. The qualitative data is reported issue by issue rather than question by question to avoid the considerable repetition that occurs in the raw data.

¹² Further details are provided in the technical appendix.

RESPONSE DATA

A total of 94,303 responses were received and followed a predictable pattern of a larger number at the beginning and towards the end. The “double hump” at the end can be accounted for by the change in closing date.



Just over 90% of responses were received on the response form sent out with the discussion booklet. The remaining responses comprised:

Forms with attachments	3,352 (3.6%)
Pre-printed forms distributed by the Combined Trade Unions	2,287 (2.4%)
No form included ¹³	1,243 (1.3%)
Other pre-printed forms	234

Forms were also provided printed in the Maori, Cook Islands Maori, Samoan, Tongan and Chinese languages. Responses were received on these forms as follows:

Chinese forms	1,162 (1.2%)
Cook Islands Maori forms	107
Maori forms	74
Samoan forms	35
Tongan forms	11

One audio tape was received. No video tapes were received.

All responses received in other languages were translated and then coded in the normal way except for the Chinese forms. Due to the large number of responses received in Chinese, two coders fluent in the written Chinese language, were recruited and trained to code the forms directly from Chinese onto the coding sheet in English. A separate report on the text data content was received from these coders.

One “outsize” form was received. This response was copied onto a standard form and scanned and analysed with all others.

¹³ These include 29 web-page responses.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The response form provided an opportunity for respondents to provide certain broad demographic information. This information is self-reported and may or may not be accurate. Once again, it is important to be clear that the results of this exercise cannot be used to generalise to the New Zealand population as a whole.

This information shows the respective proportions of responses that came from individuals, households, groups, and the different genders, age-groups, and ethnic groups that respondents came from.

Individual, household or group

The clear majority of responses came from those who reported themselves as an individual or a household.

An individual A household A group/organisation

Missing¹⁴ Invalid

Group size

It was not possible to discover from the information provided the actual number of people who responded because of the open-ended nature of the question seeking group numbers and it was possible for people to send in more than one form.

Responses recorded the following distribution of group size.

2-10 11-20 21-50 More than 50

Missing

1,548 (1.6%) responses gave the name of the group on the form.

¹⁴ Missing data indicates that there was no data in the particular box. Also included in “missing” data were blank forms returned and blank forms returned with only comment that indicated they were disaffected in some way.

Gender

Identifying numbers of males and females was problematic in that, for groups and households, it was legitimate to tick both circles. The percentages below therefore, only reflect the number of circles ticked not necessarily the actual number of males and females who responded.

Male (s)	<input type="text" value="12%"/>	Female (s)	<input type="text" value="30%"/>
Both	<input type="text" value="34%"/>		
Missing	<input type="text" value="25%"/>		

There is further information on numbers of men and women respondents in the data set volume.

Age Group

The results below are a straight count of the numbers of circles ticked. This shows that a clear majority of responses had been ticked to indicate an age group between 25 and 74, with the numbers almost equal between 25-49 and 50 to 74.

Under 25	<input type="text" value="2%"/>	25-49	<input type="text" value="30%"/>	50-74	<input type="text" value="29%"/>	75 or over	<input type="text" value="6%"/>
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The following results show the mix of age-groups found in individual, household or group responses.

Under 25 & 25-49	<input type="text" value="5%"/>	Under 25 & 50-74	<input type="text" value="1%"/>	Under 25/over 50	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Under 25 & over 75	<input type="text" value="0"/>	25-49 & 50-74	<input type="text" value="3%"/>	25-49 & 75+	<input type="text" value="0"/>
50-74 & 75+	<input type="text" value="1%"/>	Under 50 & 75+	<input type="text" value="0"/>	All age groups	<input type="text" value="0"/>
All groups over 25	<input type="text" value="0"/>	All groups under 75	<input type="text" value="1%"/>		
Missing	<input type="text" value="21%"/>				

Ethnic Group

On the question of ethnic groups, there appeared to be some misunderstanding in responses about the difference between nationality and ethnicity¹⁵.

NZ European	<input type="checkbox"/> 68%	NZ Maori	<input type="checkbox"/> 7%	NZ Pacific Island	<input type="checkbox"/> 2%
NZ Asian	<input type="checkbox"/> 3%	Other	<input type="checkbox"/> 5%	Missing	<input type="checkbox"/> 24%

PLEASE NOTE:

- All percentages have been rounded. Therefore, 0% does not mean that the box was not ticked, but rather, there were fewer ticks than were required to round up to 1% (i.e. less than 472 which is half of one percent of the total of 94,303 responses).
- Not all sub-population results add up to 100% because it was legitimate to tick a number of options in most cases.

¹⁵ A number of responses put a line through all the ethnic group options declaring that they were “all New Zealanders.” The term “New Zealanders” indicates nationality, ie belonging to a particular nation, whereas ethnic group indicates racial or cultural characteristics or background.

FINDINGS

Interpreting the findings

There are two types of results: quantitative and qualitative.

- Quantitative results indicate the frequency with which topics or themes were mentioned. These were derived from two sources: (a) from the ticked circles on the original response form; and (b) from the frequencies available from the coding sheets used to analyse the text data.
- Qualitative results are narrative descriptions of the range of opinions and ideas within responses which were recorded by coders.

Reporting the findings

All findings are reported against each question and issue covered in the discussion document in the following way:

- quantitative results or response frequencies are presented first; followed by
- qualitative results or narrative descriptions of response details. Each of these sections is headed 'comments' and paragraph headers are used to identify main themes within the narrative.

Quantitative Results

A small number of frameworks were used to code and analyse responses. These are described in detail in the technical appendix. Briefly, there were four main types of question asked on the response form.

TYPE A: Specific "yes/no" questions with an opportunity given to make additional comments. Findings are summarised and reported as direct answers to each question asked.

TYPE B: Open-ended questions, often starting with a phrase like "What can we all do...". Responses were analysed according to "who" might take any action; "what" the action might be; "to" who the action should be directed, or "through" whom the action might take place (eg the government doing something through parents or schools); and finally "how" the action should be accomplished (eg using incentives or sanctions). Findings are summarised and reported in this way.

- TYPE C: Two specific open-ended questions that sought views on what additional expectations might be added to a Code, and any comment on the Status of the Code.
- TYPE D: Very specific questions with each one being different. The options for these questions were identified during the content analysis undertaken to develop the coding sheet¹⁶.

Coders had to make choices between several hundred tick boxes in coding each response. These choices are marked in italics throughout this report, and the first time they are used in the “Findings” section their definition is presented as a footnote.

The following words were used to indicate the frequency with which the various themes were mentioned. These definitions have been applied consistently across all the questions and throughout this report.

- The majority: Used in reference to all responses and meaning fifty percent or more of the total (i.e. 94,303).
- A majority: Used in reference to *the responses to a particular question* and meaning fifty percent or more.
- Clear majority: More than seventy per cent of responses to a particular question.
- Most common theme/
Most frequently mentioned: Theme mentioned, in response to a particular question, more often than any other but less than fifty percent (i.e. where there was not a majority view).
- At least 10%: Mentioned in at least ten percent of responses to a particular question.
- Up to 10%: Mentioned in less than ten percent of responses but more than most others.

Qualitative Results

The qualitative responses give an indication of the range and variety of opinions and ideas presented. Similar comments may have been made in thousands of responses or they may only have been made in a few - indeed they may only have been made in one.

The qualitative results have added more detail than was provided by the definition of the theme in the coder’s rules. For example, if a response simply mentioned the availability of employment, jobs, work opportunities etc., then the coder would have

¹⁶ Coders advised that they found the options provided for these questions to be more limited than they would have liked. However, no detail has been lost because it was captured in the supplementary book.

ticked the box marked *Employment* for that question. If there was additional detail in the response the coder would have ticked the *Employment* box and then written either exactly what was on the response sheet or a paraphrase of it, in the supplementary book. For example, “*There was a perceived need to protect worker holidays and family time, particularly Sunday*”. The nuance of that response would not have been adequately captured by the given definition of *Employment* , and so it would have been written in the supplementary book. It is essentially this additional detail which is captured in the qualitative comment.

THE PROPOSED CODE

Question: Do you support the “expectations” set out in the booklet?

There were two opportunities to respond to this question, either by ticking a circle and/or writing a comment.

Expectations : Response Frequencies

The majority of responses¹⁷ answered this question, both by ticking a circle and/or writing a comment. A majority of responses ticked *Support*. At least 10% of responses ticked *Oppose*.

Of those responses that included a written comment, most were supportive. At least 10% of responses said *Oppose* and at least 10% of responses gave reasons or qualifications.

Comments

Comments ranged widely across the spectrum from positive to negative.

Positive comments

Responses on the positive side indicated that society needs to re-balance rights and responsibilities. They indicated that the process was democratic and involved people; that it was building towards a more positive future; that family values and responsibilities are the building blocks of a nation; and that it included good, common sense, moral and traditional family values. It was seen as a positive step; enhancing self-esteem, self-reliance and self-discipline; and it restored the balance of rights and responsibilities. Others commented that it was a fence-building rather than ambulance-running approach; and that there needs to be two-way dialogue between government and the community, while a number mentioned that they were tired of abuse of the system and a continuation of bad habits from the past. One response asserted: “human nature is such that only pain nourishes courage and wisdom; you can’t be brave or resourceful if you have only easy and wonderful things happen to you. The very system that was meant to be an emergency assistance has become another tool in the breakdown of society, its character and resourcefulness.”

¹⁷ While grammatically clumsy, the term “responses” has been used rather than “respondents” to convey that the unit of analysis was a response form not an individual respondent.

Neutral comments

A number of responses mentioned that Government should not be the social or moral centre of the nation, instead the ten commandments, the bible, spiritual teaching etc., should be the centre; and that a case-by-case approach to these issues was needed.

Negative comments

Negative responses mentioned that people couldn't be forced to be good, even through legislation; that a legal approach didn't solve anything and was unrealistic. Others mentioned that the code appeared to be underpinned by greed, moralising, selfishness, intolerance and was punitive and dangerous; they were cynical about secret agendas such as cutting costs and bashing beneficiaries; while others asserted that the code was mono-cultural, didn't recognise tino rangitiratanga, and that its outlook was entirely middle/upper class or totalitarian.

Other responses indicated that people need help to help themselves, asserting that things like having a job, being confident in the economy, and having confidence in the privacy of their lives were essential. It was suggested that if government wants people to pull up their socks could it please provide socks. A number of responses expressed dissatisfaction with the nation's leadership and their perceived inconsistency, ie MPs not "walking their talk"; while others mentioned that social justice needed to be seen to be done.

Another theme was that the code's content was too complex and confusing; and that people needed more information.

Question: Are there any other important expectations that you would like to see included? If so, what?

There were two opportunities to respond to this question, either by ticking a circle and/or writing a comment.

Other Expectations : Response Frequencies

About half of responses answered this question by ticking a circle.

Of those who ticked a circle, a majority indicated that they wanted to see other expectations included.

About half of responses included a comment. Of those who did, most indicated further *Expectations of Government*¹⁸, up to 10% of responses mentioned *Government performance*¹⁹, *Responsible leadership*²⁰, *Jobs/employment*²¹; and the provision of an *Equitable/positive environment*²².

Up to 10% of responses mentioned further expectations of the *Community*²³ and *Family/Parents/Individuals*²⁴.

Comments

Role of government

The need for government to support families and individuals when they were unable to provide for themselves was noted, as was the need to ensure access to essential services based on need rather than the ability to pay. Government was encouraged to use tax-payers' money wisely, to promote the health and well-being of citizens; to provide equal access for publicly funded education for all citizens; to fund access to equal justice for all; and to make laws that guarantee safety and freedom from exploitation in the workplace. A related message was the need to hold business accountable; and to protect the weak and needy, including the unborn, from the excesses of the free-market and right-wing philosophy. It was suggested that the

¹⁸ Stated expectations of government, code for MPs etc.

¹⁹ Efficiency and effectiveness of facilities, services and support provided by government/government agencies including parliament.

²⁰ Seeking improvements in the behaviour of or example set by politicians and political leaders.

²¹ Provision of jobs or employment either directly or by influencing the employment market in some way.

²² Reference to "big picture" issues such as the development of an equitable and just society, a caring community etc.

²³ Society as a whole or communities; includes business community and the community/voluntary sector.

²⁴ Family including grandparents, parents and other relatives and individuals.

measure of a nation's character is how well it cares for its sick, its young, its old and its vulnerable. Similarly, the importance of the natural environment and the responsibility of government to protect it, including ensuring business and everyone else acted appropriately, was mentioned.

Other responses called for better access to health services ranging from Plunket, through dental subsidies, to adequacy of care for those with mental health problems; and including concerns about levels of care available in the community.

Finally, it was suggested that government needs to base laws on facts and figures rather than the emotional issues such as the booklet sets out; and that any "body" established to provide policies and law for this code must have the expertise of members of society who live the life of the target group, not bureaucrats or so-called experts.

Leadership

Issues of leadership referred to: the need for a code of behaviour for Members of Parliament (MPs); cynicism about policy/law that appeared ad hoc and not based on clear research and consultation. Other responses indicated that there were too many MPs; that greater focus on investment activities such as developing small business and protecting New Zealand industries was needed; and that recognising and promoting successes, for example effective families and other role models would help.

Well-being of Citizens

Concerns about the well-being of citizens were expressed. Certain responses called for greater authority for the Commissioner for Children, greater tolerance of all races, religions and sexual orientation. Others expressed very firm views to the contrary. The place and well-being of older people and families was mentioned; as was the apparent lack and breakdown of discipline. Others mentioned the prevalence of destructive behaviours such as gambling, smoking, alcoholism, drug use and suicide and other anti-social behaviour like violence and swearing. These were generally mentioned in connection with youth. Calls were made to help youth through "cleaning up" TV, supporting the arts and sport, and providing a stable and equitable environment for them to grow up in.

Funding

The adequacy of funding for education, housing, health and income support was highlighted. Government was called upon to both increase and reduce taxes; to simplify tax laws; to reduce GST on essentials; and to protect national assets, ie not to sell any more and re-nationalise those already sold.

Income

The issue of income was discussed at length, in particular: the adequacy of incomes (both of those working and those on benefits); excessive size of managerial incomes; the notion of a universal basic income; a perceived need to tighten criteria for access to beneficiary income; and pensioners' incomes being too little. On the subject of pensioners' incomes there was a call to stop worrying pensioners about pension cuts. It was also queried whether a basic wage should support one person or a family. It was suggested that it currently seems to be one person, so do we really value families? It was suggested that we must, for a healthy society.

Maori issues

In relation to Maori, divergent views emerged. A clear theme was on the need to honour the Treaty; to settle injustices fairly and quickly; to enhance the powers of the Treaty of Waitangi Tribunal; and to use settlements pro-actively to enhance the well-being of all Maori. Contrary views called for the abolition of the Treaty, Tribunal, and settlements process, noting potential dangers of civil unrest and racial disharmony. A call was also made for clearer research into Maori under-achievement. Finally, it was suggested that the code was a mono-cultural proposal which would be ineffective and was an insult to Maori.

Improvements in social services

An overall improvement was sought in the broad area of social services, including: better coordination; adequate funding; and support of programmes such as anger management courses aimed at breaking cycles of violence and dysfunction. Adequate and affordable housing (including a call to resurrect capitalisation of family benefit for housing deposits); child-care; and a review of the roles and funding of community organisations were also mentioned.

The performance of The Children, Young Persons and their Families Service (CYPFS) was mentioned. Calls were made for adequate resources and improved quality in service delivery, particularly regarding the competence and training of social workers, and in managing fostering.

Educational issues

There were expectations expressed around access to education (viewed by certain responses as an investment) at all levels. Calls were made to: abolish student loans and cancel outstanding loan debts; promote lifelong learning; support skill training in communication, parenting, marriage, and social/life skills; teach religion; increase the number of male teachers; improve the overall quality of teachers; make pre-school compulsory; and crack-down on bullies.

Legal and justice issues

In discussing legal and justice issues, a range of approaches were advocated such as reparation for victims, public humiliation of offenders, targeting of repeat offenders, use of compulsory military training, and improving accountability of judges. Improvements in accessing the justice system based on need not money, and the need for more police were also mentioned.

Laws concerning divorce were mentioned - for example, that it was too easy to break up families. Equal pay for women; the need for compulsory maternity leave; the notion of a Social Responsibility Act; the need for a New Zealand Constitution; and the need for a media code of responsibility were also mentioned.

Sanctions and punishments

A tougher line on justice/offending was sought, with harsher punishments for offenders, including capital punishment for murderers. The use of the army to support police; clamping down on gangs; compulsory adoption of the children of poor parents; and sterilisation of unmarried mothers after their first child, were the more hard line approaches suggested.

Employment issues

Many employment issues were raised and suggestions made, such as: increasing tariffs on imports; reforming or getting rid of The Employment Contracts Act (ECA); lowering the retirement age (it was mentioned that this would free up jobs); and tightening immigration criteria (including refugees who, it was asserted, needed to recognise their responsibilities to their new country). It was suggested that there was a need for a code that put legal obligations on employers to negotiate with workers collectively and in good faith, pay decent wages, and treat employees fairly. There was a perceived need to protect worker holidays and family time, particularly Sunday; to protect workers from employer exploitation; and to enhance job safety and security.

The role of the churches and spirituality

The role of churches in providing spiritual leadership was discussed. The need to promote a moral society; to “live” the Ten Commandments; and to build respect for traditional religious values to enhance the spiritual health of the community was mentioned. Responses also called for greater recognition of the obligations that people have, one for another, to raise their children properly and to not have children if they can't afford them. On the issue of abortion there was concern expressed that as abortions are accepted by many, it makes it harder to expect people to respect and protect children.

ISSUE ONE - LOOKING AFTER OUR CHILDREN

Question: What further steps can we all take to encourage good parenting and help solve the problem of child abuse and neglect?

Encouraging Good Parenting : Response Frequencies

This question was answered in about two thirds of responses.

WHO:	A majority of responses did not specifically identify “who” should act. The most frequently mentioned theme, mentioned in at least 10% of responses, related to <i>Government</i> .
WHAT:	There was no majority view. The most frequently mentioned actions concerned <i>Education</i> ²⁵ . At least 10% of responses mentioned <i>Attitude/Approach</i> ²⁶ , <i>Funding</i> ²⁷ and <i>Social Services</i> ²⁸ .
TO/THROUGH:	There was no majority view. At least 10% of responses indicated roles for <i>Father/Mother</i> . Up to 10% of responses mentioned <i>School/Teachers</i> , and <i>Children</i> were the obvious recipients.
HOW:	There was no majority view. At least 10% of responses mentioned <i>Educate/Promote</i> ²⁹ . At least 10% of responses mentioned <i>Sanctions/conditions</i> ³⁰ .

²⁵ All levels of education from pre-school to tertiary and including adult education and training and education services or support.

²⁶ Changes of attitude or way of thinking or approaching issues.

²⁷ Funding of facilities and support services but not including direct income support to individuals/families.

²⁸ Social services or support including counselling, budget advice, housing etc. Includes government services such as CYPFS, as well as voluntary/community services such as Citizens Advice Bureau.

²⁹ Broad educational and public awareness activities including those done through advertising, promotion and publicity through all media.

³⁰ Imposing penalties including fines, imprisonment and punishment of various forms, and the placing of conditions on the receipt of services and support.

Question: What can be done to send the message that everybody shares responsibility for helping to protect children?

Sharing Responsibility : Response Frequencies

The majority of responses answered this question.

WHO: A majority did not specifically identify “who” should act. The most frequently mentioned theme, mentioned in at least 10% of responses, related to *Government*.

WHAT: There was no majority view. The most frequently mentioned actions, mentioned in at least 10% of responses, related to changes in *Attitude/Approach*. At least 10% of responses mentioned *Education*.

TO/THROUGH: There was no majority view concerning roles. However, *Father/Mother* was most frequently mentioned.

HOW: There was no majority view. At least 10% of responses mentioned *Educate/Promote*. It was mentioned more than all other strategies combined.

Comments

Leadership and community

There were calls for clear leadership on this issue. This included leaders recognising and rewarding good performance and being more responsible in their statements and policy decisions. It was suggested that the ability of parents in crisis to reach out for help has been overshadowed by the sense of blame and shame directed at them. The involvement of local authority and local community groups in policy development was also suggested. Similarly, calls for increased numbers of community workers, the formation of support groups, greater community awareness, and the interaction of neighbours were also made. Finally, the promotion of community based programmes, particularly successful community initiatives, and a supportive community philosophy were all considered valuable.

Suggested changes in approach

A range of approaches to problem solving were called for; greater love, compassion, fairness and understanding to be evident in the community, and less political correctness. There were calls for consideration of solutions other than market based solutions, such as: more listening to children; encouraging men to have greater

compassion and understanding of the needs of children; and greater support for family focused policies, grounded in quality research and including family/child impact studies.

Parents' needs

Needs of parents mentioned included: parenting education in courses on "Tough Love", communication, self-esteem, anger-management, pre and post-natal care, budgeting, and home-crafts. Night classes were recommended for accessibility, and transcendental meditation as an aid to learning and relieving stress. Needs for free and available child-care (including at night); provision of baby car seats at the hospital; parent network groups; a Parents Day national holiday to celebrate parents efforts; and greater respect for men as parents were also mentioned. It was suggested that fear of accusations of molestation was driving a wedge between families and concerned men. Other needs of parents and families included: more shade at sports venues; no benefit for 16/17 year olds to enable them to live independently; automatic joint custody on parent separation; support for gay marriages; and honouring older women/mothers.

Other needs mentioned were fairness for second families, a lower age for leaving children alone, road safety policies, and extended family support including financial assistance if necessary. Earlier interventions with at-risk families and more affordable housing (no more than 25% of income) were also mentioned.

Children & Teenagers' needs

A wide range of needs were identified in connection with the issue of looking after children; like the need to place greater value on children and their support. To fund this support it was suggested that the rich be taxed more; that big business pay their fair share of taxes; and that all of it be reinvested in health, education and welfare.

For teenagers the need for better sex education was identified, and for males the understanding of women's rights and roles was suggested. More school counsellors were sought. Practical experience for high school students with pre-school children was suggested, along with the idea of placing these schools together to facilitate this.

Employment issues

The fundamental need for employment for everyone was stressed. Responses suggested a 4 day week, job-sharing, more part-time work, and sending mothers and older people home to free up jobs for fathers and the young. Sufficient income to enable a family to survive on one income; paid parental leave and penal rates to discourage overwork; and research in all these areas was called for.

Improving parenting

Ideas for improving and encouraging good parenting included encouraging breastfeeding, ensuring no gender confusion for young children, not smoking or drinking in front of the children, promoting equal rights/roles/responsibilities for both fathers and mothers, controlling the viewing of TV in the home, and utilising the skills of grandparents. Other responses suggested the need for recognising that having children is a privilege, and that people should place less pressure on parents. It was also suggested that married parents might take an oath to raise their children well, and there were calls for increased parental involvement in pre-school education and PTAs.

Providing support

Support services suggested, included: "safe" houses (as in Australia); adequate mental institutions; an 0800 24 hour help-line for adults, children and informers; buddy/mentoring systems; youth groups; and more home visits (particularly in relation to services provided by Plunket).

Support for a large number of existing special programmes was advocated, including: Dilworth School, PAFT, Mother's Alone; HIPPIY, Transcendental meditation, James Dobson and Ian Grant, Kid's Growing God's Way, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, Leslie Max's U5, Tipu Ora, Parenting with Confidence, Kia Marama, Alan Duff's book programme, "Breaking the Cycle" for anger management, implementing Laurie O'Reilly's suggestions, and the EVH programme (Rongotai College). It was also suggested that government should financially support the Grapevine magazine.

More support for voluntary and community groups was called for, as was better monitoring of beneficiary/at risk families and young people. In this connection better performance and accountability of CYPFS was called for, including the need to recognise that in dealing with at-risk families certain parents (as victims of abuse themselves) simply did not know any better. The desire for social workers to both take a harder approach, and to stop penalising beneficiaries unduly, was also mentioned.

To support victims of abuse, suggestions included a 24 hour 0800 help-line, holiday camps and greater follow-up of complaints. One response claimed that no one seems to want to know unless it has happened to them.

Funding

Funding assistance was sought for programmes and services, including: Plunket; Parents Centres; hospitals; dentists; pre and post-natal care; contraception and abortion; CYPFS; Kohanga; Barnado's; Women's Refuges; Holiday Programmes; Mental Health Institutions; screening of care-givers; Abuse Programmes; Parenting with Confidence courses; A Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children - a Children's SPCA; Women's Refuge; KidsWatch; Family Group Conferences; Health; Education; Child Welfare; and Housing. Support for extended family housing

arrangements, eg granny flats was also suggested along with free/subsidised child-care and income support.

Income issues

In relation to income, concerns were expressed about excessive state assistance having led to dependency. Certain responses wanted no DPB at all while others wanted more. Still others talked of restricting the DPB to deserted parents only. Calls for a fairer distribution of income were made along with the desire/need to have sufficient income to allow one parent to stay at home. Suggestions included lowering the tax burden on families/sole parents, issuing vouchers instead of cash, and to generally remove the impact of poverty in society.

Legal and justice issues

In discussing legal issues, calls were made to: support the United Nations Charter for the Rights of the Child; to enshrine children's rights in domestic law; to enhance collective responsibility for children and families; to engage extended families in the support of parents and children; and to focus on the well-being and stability of families. To this end, a Ministry of the Family was suggested. Others suggested: raising the age for pre-marital sex; raising the age that children could be left alone; and dealing more harshly with offenders in this area. Other ideas included: reviewing the Family Court System and processes (where the honesty and fairness of judges was questioned); the Privacy Act; (while protecting informants); the prison system; improvements in the enforcement power of relevant agencies like CYPFS; faster justice; strengthened enforcement of the Crimes Act and Summary Offences Act; and scrapping section 19 of the Adoption Act. The consistency of legalised abortion with the theme of protecting children was also questioned. It was also suggested that legalised abortion sends the message that children are expendable - kill them before birth, do what you like with them after birth.

Other improvements focused on communication and coordination between justice and social agencies concerned with child and family welfare. Specifically: CYPFS; Police; and child services groups, where it was suggested that involving people from more varied cultural backgrounds (particularly in the police) would improve services. More police on the beat were also suggested.

Education issues:

A range of other measures were suggested for improving schools, including: better qualified teachers and smaller class sizes; the introduction of compulsory military training; the use of experienced older people, including mothers, as mentors and in schools; the teaching of morality, citizenship, civics, the value of life, and temper control, while emphasising the positives that children bring. It was suggested that school's teach the 3 Rs - respect, responsibility and relationships. Finally, it was

suggested that teachers should be the best that we can find - money should be no obstacle - because they are nurturing our collective future.

Cultural and spiritual issues

Cultural and spiritual issues were also mentioned. These included: compulsory religious worship; prayer; legal support for god parents; respect for other cultures traditions, including traditional child rearing practices, in discipline and contraception; and the promotion of traditional Christian values, including respect and virtue.

Maori issues

In relation to Maori, the need to honour the Treaty, to settle grievances, and to use settlements for the benefit of the poor and needy was expressed. Practical suggestions included: increasing support for Matua Whaangai programmes, although calls for tightening up informal adoptions were also made; the increased use of marae based programmes utilising hui and the available guidance of kaumatua; to use Maori institutions such as wardens to monitor and support families; and to ensure the provision of more Maori nurses. The elimination of Kohanga was mentioned in a number of responses, others called for focusing efforts on urban non-tribal communities.

Sanctions and punishments

A range of sanctions and punishments were suggested for those who failed to care appropriately for children. A number of responses called for the licensing of parents and the punishment of those deemed "bad". Suggestions included sterilisation, compulsory adoption of children born out of wedlock, fines, and no benefit after the second child. Mandatory reporting of child abuse was called for along with castration of abusers. In relation to abuse, a number sought a harder line on offenders. Suggestions included publishing names, public humiliation and flogging.

Advertising and promotion

Suggestions for getting the messages across to people included: a public awareness campaign, similar to the road safety campaign and using culturally appropriate language; expanding TV advertisements on child abuse to include stories of neighbours acting on suspicions of child abuse; the use of role models; slogans; bumper stickers; cartoons; messages on LOTTO tickets and takeaway packets; and the institution of a Children's Day.

ISSUE TWO : PREGNANCY CARE

Question: What can we all do to encourage pregnant women to seek early pregnancy care?

Encouraging Pregnancy Care : Response Frequencies

The majority of responses answered this question.

WHO: A majority did not specifically identify “who” should act. The most common theme, mentioned in at least 10% of responses, related to *Government*.

WHAT: There was no majority view. At least 10% of responses mentioned actions related to *Education, Health³¹, Funding, changes in Attitude/Approach and Availability³²*.

TO/THROUGH: There was no majority view. The most common theme, mentioned in at least 10% of responses related to *Father/Mother*. At least 10% of responses mentioned *Health Professionals³³*.

HOW: There was no majority view. The most common theme, mentioned in at least 10% of responses, related to *Educate/Promote*.

³¹ Health related facilities services and support.

³² Availability of and/or access to services/facilities or support.

³³ Health professionals including doctors, nurses, specialists, and community health workers including Plunket.

Question: Should the Government use the contact it has with women receiving pregnancy-related sickness benefit to encourage good care during pregnancy, eg to check that they have sought proper care?

Government Encouraging Pregnancy Care : Response Frequencies

The majority of responses answered this question. A majority agreed that *Government* should use its contact with pregnant women to encourage good pregnancy care. At least 10% of responses gave qualifications and up to 10% of responses gave reasons. At least 10% of responses did not agree, again with at least 10% of responses giving qualifications and up to 10% of responses giving reasons. About a third of responses did not answer the question at all.

Comments

The range of comments on this question went from preventing pregnancy in the first place right through to supporting new mothers.

Role of government

Responses noted, in a variety of ways, concerns about the appropriateness of government action in this area. Concerns were expressed about potential abuse of civil rights, with a number of responses arguing against what they saw might become totalitarian or police state type measures by government and/or its agencies.

Pregnancy prevention

There were responses that suggested that pregnancy should be prevented in the first place through better family planning. Recommendations included: free contraception; encouraging chastity; and discouraging early sexual activity. On a related theme, educational suggestions included: more/less safe sex instruction, including pregnancy care; instruction on home-crafts, information on foetal alcohol syndrome, and improving communication between young men and women. Teen outreach programmes were recommended. Responses also identified issues relating to employment, including the need for more jobs - which it was argued - would discourage women from getting pregnant in the first place.

Abortion

There were a range of views expressed on abortion. On the one hand, user pays abortions using the freed up funding to pay for more pregnancy care, to stopping doctors pressuring women to have abortions if they attend for early pregnancy care on the other. The perception that there was a fundamental inconsistency between legalised abortion and the promotion of early pregnancy care came through in a number of responses. In a similar vein, it was suggested that unborn children be accorded statutory rights, including appropriate care.

Availability and access to services

A wide range of services were discussed, and their cost, availability and adequacy mentioned. Specific examples included: homes for unwed mothers; free dentist care; comprehensive health care involving 0800 Plunket help lines, mentors, case managers, and counsellors; midwives being listed in the front of the phone-book like doctors; after-hours access to health professionals; services located on site in high risk communities, including rural communities; child-care; transport; housing; and community based programmes such as groups for teen mothers, stop smoking programmes and exercise groups.

Funding issues were identified for Plunket, school clinics, the costs of specialist care, community health advocates, and other relevant agencies and services.

Alternative medical and non-medical approaches

A change in approaches to pregnancy care were also suggested. These included: more home visits; greater family support, including fathers, for pregnancy care visits; changing hospitals to a non-profit orientation; more respectful treatment of women; the adoption of alternative medicines and natural fertility management strategies; and locating pregnancy care away from illness facilities (de-medicalisation). Responses also advocated more non-threatening, culturally sensitive pregnancy care using the language/leaders/health professionals/churches from the womens' own communities.

In the health arena more women doctors were advocated along with an improvement in the relationship between midwives and doctors. A quick resolution of the lead carer debate was also called for. More early pregnancy testing and research into why early pregnancy care was not sought was mentioned, as was the suggestion that pregnancy testing kits not be available over the counter to ensure new mothers got linked into the health system. Research on why pregnant beneficiaries smoke was also suggested.

Advertising and promotion

Numerous suggestions for promotion were made, such as a national health campaign funded by big business, and promoting messages such as home birth and 'good

parenting starts with conception' through effective advertising. This could involve both standard and subliminal advertising: on TV; using Women's Magazines; condom packets; cigarette packets; and beer cans. It was also suggested that knighthoods be given to foster parents rather than industrialists.

In a related theme, responses suggested the promotion of messages confirming the high value of motherhood. An example given was changing the name of the pregnancy-related sickness benefit to "The New Life Benefit". Other suggestions involved sending the message that mothers should care for themselves first, including those under 18; and to more jobs having adequate paid maternity leave. On the other hand certain responses recommended a hardening of attitudes towards unwed mothers, offering no sympathy to discourage unwanted pregnancy, and a role for the churches in connection with this.

Incentives

Incentives were suggested such as give-aways for compliant mothers (for example creams and nappies), or early pregnancy care entitling mothers to free post natal care.

Sanctions and punishments

Punitive measures were mentioned, including cutting the DPB availability after the first child, banning smoking, drinking and drugs, and closing down all pubs and casinos. Others mentioned were: having the baby confiscated; compulsory pregnancy registration; compulsory pregnancy care; compulsory abortion for abnormal babies; compulsory abortions for unwed mothers; and sterilisation for repeat 'offenders'. Lowering the age of consent was also suggested to reduce fear of prosecution for underage mothers.

Maori issues

In relation to Maori, suggestions included: more marae-based health-care/programmes such as Tipu Ora; support for traditional healers; and more Maori midwives/nurses making home visits. In connection with Kohanga, a number of responses recommended they be used to check mothers on the one hand, while other responses called for a cancelling of Kohanga and the use of the funding for all under 5s.

Do nothing

A number of responses said that nothing should be done for a variety of reasons, including: that people couldn't be forced; that it is a woman's choice; and that it is already free and how easy can it be? Others asserted that no one really knows what is best regarding early pregnancy care, and that if the woman is a pregnancy-related sickness beneficiary, she must have already seen a doctor to have her status confirmed - so what is all the fuss about?

ISSUE THREE : KEEPING CHILDREN HEALTHY

Question: What more can we all do to make sure all young children receive immunisations and child health checks? Should Income Support encourage parents on benefits to take their children for immunisations and child health checks?

Encouraging Immunisations & Health Checks : Response Frequencies

The majority of responses answered these questions.

WHO: A clear majority did not specifically identify “who” should act. Of those who did, most indicated *Government*.

WHAT: There was no majority view. The most frequently mentioned actions, mentioned in at least 10% of responses, related to *Health*. Up to 10% of responses mentioned *Funding*.

TO/THROUGH: No clear picture emerged concerning roles. However, *Health Professionals* were mentioned most.

HOW: There was no majority view on a strategy. However, *Educate/Promote* was most frequently mentioned.

While there was no majority view, most responses agreed that Income Support should encourage parents on benefits to take their children for immunisations and child health checks. However, at least 10% of responses disagreed. At least 10% of responses gave reasons and up to 10% of responses gave qualifications.

Question: If parents have made an informed choice to have their children immunised, should up to date immunisations be required for entry to early childhood education services and schools?

Requiring Immunisations : Response Frequencies

The majority of responses answered this question. A majority agreed that up-to-date immunisations be required if parents have made an informed choice. However, at least 10% of responses did not agree. At least 10% of responses gave reasons and up to 10% of responses gave qualifications.

Comments

Unfortunately, the wording of these questions (which covered both immunisation and health checks) may have led to confusion in the analysis of responses because it was not always clear which question responses were referring to. As far as possible they have been separated out.

Immunisation

This issue was characterised by a very clear contrast in responses. Those opposed to compulsory immunisation gave reasons including the idea that immunisation destroys peoples' immune system and that over time people have developed immunity to many of the vaccines given. A lack of research was cited particularly around safety issues, such as the use of multiple vaccines, particularly the use of vaccines among the very young³⁴. Others suggested children over 5 only to be immunised.

Need for research and better information

Research was called for into other options for immunisation, specifically more natural and holistic alternatives; for example, homeopathy. A number of responses were cynical about government's past performance in this area - expressing concern about the potential for using cheap and unsafe vaccines. Similarly, it was suggested that international pharmaceutical companies had huge influence in this area. Another view expressed was the very confusing and conflicting body of medical opinion which exists on this subject, making it too difficult for parents to make informed choices with any confidence.

Inconsistency of messages

Responses suggested that there was an inconsistency between the overall message of the code towards self-reliance on the one hand, and the suggestion of compulsory measures in this instance on the other. Others mentioned that Income Support as a monitoring body had nothing to do with health and was therefore inappropriate. Others asked why sanctions should apply to beneficiaries only.

Adverse events following immunisation

A number of personal experiences were cited in responses where children were left permanently disabled by adverse reactions to vaccination. Quite apart from the emotional trauma, it was argued that this was very unfair given the limited support/compensation received when the children concerned had essentially been sacrificed to the public good. Much more realistic compensation was called for to

³⁴ For example it was stated that in Japan children under 2 are never vaccinated. However, this is not true.

balance up what had been endured by these families in the public interest. Other responses observed that parents who feel strongly for or against immunisation are likely to be those who are doing their best for their children.

Compulsion

In relation to the proposal that immunisation be required for entry to pre-school, responses expressed disagreement on a number of fronts, including: the perceived injustice of penalising the children; the fact that immunised children could not be affected by the attendance of non-immunised children; and that such a move would contradict a basic human right to education. On the other hand there were responses that agreed that compulsory, up-to-date immunisations would be a good idea.

Suggestions supporting compulsion included making immunisation a condition of benefit receipt because they believed this would prevent the rising incidence of certain diseases previously thought to have been eradicated. Certain responses suggested immunisation as a pre-requisite for access to all levels of education; that it should include testing for TB; and that it should be a pre-requisite for getting a passport. Similarly people raised the importance of ensuring immigrants were immunised.

Responses suggested that parents who chose not to immunise their children should pay the full costs of any health care resulting from that decision. Others suggested that individual schools should set their own entry criteria while a number noted that the threat of illness was probably greater from the children of working parents sent to school because of lack of ability to care for them at home. This was also mentioned in connection with the possible fear of repercussions on parents innocently sending sick children to school.

Proposed exemptions

A range of exemptions were suggested from any move to compulsion, including those on moral or religious grounds, and those who science could not guarantee would not be adversely affected.

Role of Income Support service

Income Support was seen in a number of responses to be in an ideal position to keep contact with beneficiaries on this issue. It was suggested that doctors and nurses might be on Income Support premises, and that perhaps any government department who had contact with parents of young children might use that contact to ensure immunisation.

Educative approaches

Consultation/education was seen to be a better approach than compulsion by a number of responses. However, others felt that a more hard line approach was

necessary. There were responses that expressed a preference for better education on the need for immunisation and the value of healthy diets in strengthening the natural immune system. It was suggested that a healthy home/family would result in far fewer health problems for children.

Other responses suggested incentives such as no school fees, bonuses for parents, hospital costs discounts and health insurance/hospital fee discounts for those who are immunised. Others suggested decoupling the 6 week check-up for mothers from mandatory immunisation³⁵ of the babies because this may have the effect of mothers delaying their check up. Others talked of stopping the changing of vaccine dates, which is confusing parents, and of designating particular months for immunisation and backing this up with a national advertising campaign.

Support services

Responses suggested numerous ways to improve immunisation levels in the community, including resurrecting Plunket and adequately supporting it; promoting breastfeeding through longer hospital stays after birth and provision of clean public breast feeding facilities; providing immunisation clinics in shopping malls; provision of affordable/accessible community facilities; and information to parents at the birth of the baby were suggested.

Advertising and promotion

The promotion of the role of motherhood and importance of advertising the fact that immunisation is free was advocated. Others suggested it should be free, and that providing vouchers etc. would be an incentive. Still other suggestions included a nationwide database and sending out follow-up appointments similar to those for cervical smears. Those who discussed the specific link to benefit payments, suggested only paying the benefit on proof of immunisation; and a system of graduated payments ranging from provision of bonuses through to deducting a portion of benefits where immunisations are not completed.

Health Checks

Educative approaches

Responses suggested that education should play a significant role. Examples ranged from using advertising on TV, the media, and fast food outlets like McDonalds, through to including nutrition and biology in the 3rd and 4th form curriculum and teaching self-healing and affirmation techniques to children. Others focused on the specific need to teach hygiene to children from a very young age.

³⁵ There is no mandatory immunisation in New Zealand.

Role of government

Suggestions focused on improving the overall health system, calling for organisation design which engendered greater trust and confidence in users. More specific suggestions included: a public health system which had comprehensive child health policies linking the physical, mental, social and emotional well-being of children; the placing of child-health nurses in doctors surgeries and schools; funding mobile clinics; funding compulsory/random 6 monthly and annual health checks; and making it compulsory for teachers to report on poor health among children. It was also suggested that armed forces medical teams should visit schools, and that action should be taken to limit the size of families.

There were responses that suggested Income Support should not be involved in health checks. Others believed that if providing health checks was an Income Support goal, then they should pay for it. In this context, responses referred to the cost of obtaining health-care, linking that to non-availability of work for some; inadequacy of income for some; the relative high cost of even basic needs such as food, housing and transport; and recommending therefore, that all health-care, particularly for the young (ranging up to 18) be free and accessible for all. Suggestions included free optical and dental health-care.

Other suggestions spoke of administrative approaches to health-care, including the establishment of a national database which would monitor child health specifically in areas of eyesight, hearing, foot problems, speech defects, tonsils and development.

Adequate resources and support for targeted initiatives were mentioned. These included: those aimed towards at-risk groups like Maori and Pacific Islands people; targeting to prevent foetal alcohol syndrome; and supporting wider availability of the PAFT programme. It was suggested that sick children increased the risk of sick parents, and hence the cost to everybody.

In relation to health promotion, it was suggested that housing was of central importance. Responses linked the market rent policy with pressure on family budgets, poor housing conditions impacting on child health, and suggestions included introducing low-cost, rent-to-buy schemes.

There were responses that considered it unjust to target beneficiaries in relation to such issues, mentioning that people should be trusted to make such decisions on their own. Others mentioned that Income Support was already significantly over-burdened without additional responsibilities.

Incentives

The use of incentives was suggested by a number of responses, including: linking benefit receipt to good parenting measures; free holidays at health camps for low income families; free lollies at Doctors visits; subsidised multi-vitamins; a point system with a financial incentive; and giving people either money or free health products such

as lice solutions. Subsidising the cost of organic fruit and vegetables and the reintroduction of free fruit and milk at school was also suggested.

Breastfeeding and alternative health approaches

Positive mentions were made about the importance of breast feeding and support for organisations like La Leche League and Plunket. The need for more health workers trained in the culture and language of at-risk groups, more friendly doctors, and the availability of alternative health approaches such as Maharishi Vedic centres.

The role of Plunket and other support agencies

The role of Plunket and its past successes was highlighted by responses, as was its current decline, which was noted with regret. It was suggested that partial user-pays might support a rejuvenated Plunket movement. It was suggested that mothers should be contributing financially to supporting Plunket or a portion of benefits being used directly for this purpose. Similarly, the apparent withdrawal of church-provided homes was seen as a loss.

Sanctions and punishments

A number of responses suggested a punitive approach such as compulsory health checks; loss of benefits; fines; or even having the children removed. The prevalence of smoking among certain families was also mentioned as behaviour that needed modification.

Role of the community and churches

Greater community involvement was suggested; for example neighbours helping to take children to health checks. The role of churches was highlighted in strengthening people from the “inside out”, as well as being a forum for passing on information.

Maori issues

In relation to the Maori community, suggestions included: using Maori Trust Boards etc. as vehicles for appropriate child health programmes; supporting more marae-based programmes; training of more Maori health workers; and the suggestion that settlement funds be used to secure improvements in child health.

Personal experiences

A number of responses cited personal experiences of serious health system failure, including being sent home 2 days after giving birth and receiving no further contact for 2 weeks. Another respondent told of a child being sent home with a broken arm and not seen for 3 days. Urgent and widespread difficulties associated with glue ear were noted with concern - particularly in view of the long-term impact of delays in dealing with this condition.

ISSUE FOUR : LEARNING FOR THOSE UNDER 5

Question: How can the government encourage parents and other family members to support their children's learning?

Encouraging Children's Learning : Response Frequencies

The majority of responses answered this question.

- WHO: A majority did not specifically identify "who" should act³⁶. Of those who did, most indicated *Government*.
- WHAT: There was no majority view. The most frequently mentioned action related to *Education*. At least 10% of responses mentioned *Funding, Attitude/Approach* and *Availability*.
- TO/THROUGH: There was no majority view. At least 10% of responses indicated roles for *Father/Mother*. Up to 10% of responses mentioned *School/Teachers*, and *Children* were the obvious recipients.
- HOW: *Educate/Promote* was mentioned more frequently than all other strategies combined. Up to 10% of responses mentioned *Incentives*.

³⁶ Where government was specifically mentioned in the question, coders were advised not to worry about ticking the government box if it was obviously a role for government.

Question: New Zealand is doing well in the area of early childhood education for 3 and 4 year olds. What can we all do to support children's learning in the earlier years?

Supporting Children's Learning : Response Frequencies

The majority of responses answered this question.

- WHO: A majority did not specifically identify "who" should act. Of those who did, most indicated *Government*. Up to 10% of responses mentioned *Families/Parents/Individuals*.
- WHAT: There was no majority view. The most frequently mentioned action related to *Education*. At least 10% of responses mentioned *Funding, Attitude/Approach* and *Availability*.
- TO/THROUGH: There was no majority view. At least 10% of responses indicated roles for *Father/Mother*. Up to 10% of responses mentioned *School/Teachers*, and *Children* were the obvious recipients.
- HOW: There was no majority view. The most common theme, mentioned in at least 10% of responses, was *Educate/Promote*.

Question: Should parent support and education services be targeted more to families with the greatest needs? If so, how should this be done?

Targeting Education Support : Response Frequencies

The majority of responses did not answer the first question. In those that did, the most common theme, mentioned in at least 10% of responses was agreement. At least 10% of responses disagreed. At least 10% of responses gave reasons and up to 10% of responses gave qualifications.

The majority of responses answered the second question.

WHO: A majority did not specifically identify "who" should act. Of those who did, most indicated *Government*.

WHAT: There was no majority view. The most frequently mentioned action related to *Education*. At least 10% of responses mentioned *Funding* and up to 10% of responses mentioned *Social Services*

TO/THROUGH: No clear picture emerged concerning roles.

HOW: No clear picture emerged concerning strategies. However, *Educate/Promote* was most frequently mentioned. *Targeting*³⁷ and *No Targeting*³⁸ were mentioned about the same.

Comments

Role of government

There were responses that recommended Government's first step ought to be: to follow the recommendations of prior reports; undertake comparative studies on the relative position of New Zealand children; and collection of statistics on the outcomes of pre-school education. It was also suggested, the need was for greater support for 14-18 years olds, rather than 3-8 year olds. While there were responses that agreed with the thrust of early childhood education, there were others who advocated "carefree" childhood below the age of 5, and more time at home with a parent and family in the very early years.

Other responses suggested: discouraging day-care because caring for young children is a family responsibility; encouraging two-parent families by stopping the DPB;

³⁷ Targeting support, services and incentives or sanctions to particular groups rather than to everyone.

³⁸ Making services available to everyone irrespective of means or status and applying any sanctions to everyone, not just specific groups, eg beneficiaries.

supporting the bonding with fathers by ensuring they have sufficient time off (as in Norway); and fathers separated from their children having the opportunity to participate in and fund their children's education.

Broad measures suggested, included elevating the status of caring for children through: paying better wages to early childhood workers; paying parents to look after their children; NZQA standards for care-giving; registering early childhood education/child-care workers; and reinstating Kindergarten teachers under the State Sector Act.

A wide range of measures for government provision were suggested. These included: checks for foetal alcohol syndrome; for pre-school English speaking ability; reduction in the price of books and school supplies through removal of GST; monitoring teacher performance; monitoring parent performance and literacy (for example through midwives testing); compelling English to be learned by all; free meals for poor children; encouraging breastfeeding; and providing drug programmes for afflicted parents.

Funding

Adequate funding for all appropriate services was suggested, including: proper housing; free books available to all; educational toys and equipment, including personal computers for pre-schools; toy libraries; toys to meet government approved standards; support for those with learning difficulties, eg ADD children; classes for illiterate parents; education for both current parents and future parents, including support for tertiary training for parents; provision of learning kits for parents; and access to training at pre-school premises. The provision of a comprehensive home schooling system was suggested, as was free early learning programmes which would be accessible through transport assistance or other measures. A reduction in waiting lists for access to pre-school learning, and the locating of pre-school, primary and secondary school facilities together were suggested. Similarly, a reduction in class sizes and the re-introduction of streaming to support the development of both bright students and those with difficulties. Funding for rural schools, pre-schools, and mobile pre-school was mentioned. A number of responses also suggested making all pre-schools community funded to ensure funds are more effectively spent.

Role of the media (particularly television)

Suggestions included: the need for less media negativity about schools and teachers generally; a pre-school page in the local paper; concern about excessive TV watching instead of homework; and a general raising of responsibility for improving children's education away from school.

Support for programmes and services

Greater government support was suggested for a variety of programmes, including: PAFT, SPELD, Headstart (USA), Virtues (Bahai), DISCOVERY (Global Youth Foundation), Alan Duff's book programme, second-hand book exchanges, transcendental meditation/yogic flying, Musical Tots and the like.

Practical suggestions included: minders for at-risk children; residential facilities for disabled children; a "learning house" for helping children with their homework, similar to a safe house; encouragement of more male teachers; and programmes such as the Academy programme at Aranui High School.

Other measures suggested were subsidies and greater use of the Montessori model; redevelopment of the Plunket movement; greater support for programmes such as HIPPIE, EARS, James Dobson video (particularly for new DPB recipients); the licensing of new parents, including certification in child-care; provision of learning centres for beneficiaries; and correspondence courses. In a similar vein, responses suggested incentives like scholarships; getting rid of daylight saving to encourage better sleeping patterns; availability of teaching styles more appropriate to the needs of boys; the wholesale adoption of Donna Awatere's prescription for education and ridding the education system of politically correct/Maori content.

Spirituality and the family

Supporting traditional and Christian family values was mentioned, including: living the Ten Commandments; family prayer; and Bible study not consumerism. Alternatively, support was suggested for rationalism ahead of religious belief.

There were also responses that focused on the actions of individuals, families and the community. Suggestions included: parents taking greater time with their children to read, play, sing, and walk with them; and the need for families to be less accommodating of cannabis use in the home. A number of responses suggested parents take the time to read to the unborn; to read to their children nightly; to have greater involvement in pre-school; to spend more family time including a weekly home evening - in short to simply enjoy their children more and to play together on the premise that they would then be more likely to stay together.

Roles for older people in a wide variety of activities helping younger people were suggested, including: availability of community based mentors; and adopt-a-granny schemes, where older people could read/sing to children and generally provide support, particularly for isolated parents. Local authority support was also recommended in relation to the provision of services such as free libraries, toy libraries, and community education programmes which used volunteers or unemployed to help.

Legal issues including sanctions and punishments

There were responses which took a more legalistic approach, suggesting: the re-introduction of corporal punishment; raising/lowering of compulsory schooling ages; compulsion in relation to attendance; the introduction of Saturday schools for pre-schoolers; the increasing and decreasing of rights of parents to discipline their children; amending privacy laws to force greater parental involvement in education; and the introduction of statutory infant rights.

Similarly, a range of sanctions were suggested for compulsorily punishing parents who fail to support their children's preschool education through various measures, including: sterilisation; fining and hanging; the banning of alcohol, drugs, cigarettes and gambling; and the closing or restricting the hours of pubs and casinos.

Targeting

The issue of targeting was discussed from numerous perspectives. On the one hand, responses opposed to targeting cited the needs which exist widely in the community; the potential divisiveness of targeting regimes; the impossibility of assessing need accurately and the dangers of setting criteria too tightly and in the wrong place. Others opposed to targeting noted the racial dimension, expressing concern about "capture by cultural police". Still others noted that it is simply cheaper not to target and that it makes more sense given inherent difficulties, ie some people never change.

Alternative targeting approaches were suggested; for example, targeting on the basis of learning-need not financial-need. Others suggested incentives such as giving parents dollar for dollar support. On the other hand certain responses were of the view that incentives didn't work, and that a more hard-nosed approach was required. In a similar vein, abuse of state support designed for the needy, by children of wealthy people was abhorred. There were calls for the closing of private schools as they were seen as being building blocks of a class system.

Other targeting suggestions included: focusing on the poor; those in rural communities; large families; and Maori and Pacific Islanders. Others suggested not targeting on the basis of race, and not if it was done at the expense of others.

Certain responses suggested that New Zealand children might benefit from a sponsorship approach similar to that applied by World Vision and CCF. Other responses were of the view that education was a public good to be universally provided and not a market commodity.

Employment and income

The influence and importance of family income/employment was noted. There were calls for increased income for families to enable one parent to stay at home. Suggestions included: reducing the tax burden on families with young children; having

no working mothers; reducing the working week and retaining holidays to support family time; more flexible glide time employment conditions for parents; workplace creches and tax breaks for employers who provide them; more time-off for parents to visit schools and do parent helping; and greater availability of job sharing and part-time work arrangements.

One suggestion was that young mothers could be employed to work in pre-schools. Government was called upon to fix income/poverty related difficulties seen to be inhibiting children's learning, eg inadequate housing.

Issues for Maori and Pacific Islands people

Responses focused on the needs of the Maori and Pacific Island communities, suggesting: more teachers from these communities; the availability of more services in the languages of these communities, eg bilingual pamphlets; the compulsory learning of Maori but not at the exclusion of learning the 3Rs; the use of settlement funding to support early childhood learning among the Maori community; more advertising on Iwi radio; more Pacific Islands teachers at the pre-school level and the expansion of Anau Ako Pasifika. Other responses called for monitoring of Kohanga Reo for reading, listening, learning and basic social skills; a stop to the funding of Kohanga and the funding of Maori language advertisements; and a stop to Maori immersion programmes and the further fragmentation of education along racial lines.

Do nothing

There were responses that took the view nothing more needed to be done, ie if we were doing well in this area, why were we not focusing elsewhere? Alternatively why do anything at all? It was suggested: everything needed was being done; that there was no good to be had from doing any more; that what was needed now was more community leadership and community based effort; and that as most were doing just fine, any further intervention by government would be unwarranted and unwanted.

ISSUE FIVE : GETTING CHILDREN TO SCHOOL READY TO LEARN

Question: What can we all do to help see that children attend school well prepared and ready to learn?

Preparing Children To Learn : Response Frequencies

The majority of responses answered this question.

- WHO: There was no majority view. At least 10% of responses mentioned *Government* and *Family/Parents/Individuals* in about equal measure.
- WHAT: There was no majority view. The most frequently mentioned action related to *Education*. At least 10% of responses mentioned *Attitude/Approach* and *Nourishment*³⁹.
- TO/THROUGH: There was no majority view. At least 10% of responses indicated roles for *Father/Mother* and *School/Teachers*. *Children* were the obvious recipients.
- HOW: There was no majority view. At least 10% of responses mentioned the strategy *Educate/Promote*. Up to 10% of responses mentioned *Incentives*⁴⁰, *Sanctions/conditions* and *Monitor/Prevent*⁴¹ in about equal measure.

³⁹ Nourishing, particularly children, with love, care, food etc.

⁴⁰ Provision of incentives usually in the form of free facilities, services or support, or in the provision of financial incentives (eg tax).

⁴¹ Monitoring in particular with a view to preventative measures in the areas of health, pregnancy care, crime prevention etc.

Question: What else can the government do to make sure that children regularly attend school? e.g. Should parents who receive a benefit be required, as a condition of benefit, to get their children to school?

Ensuring Regular Attendance : Response Frequencies

The majority of responses answered these questions. Of those who answered the second question, a majority said Yes. At least 10% of these responses gave reasons and up to 10% gave qualifications.

In answer to the first question:

WHO:	A clear majority did not specifically identify anyone. Of those who did, most indicated <i>Government</i> .
WHAT:	There was no majority view but <i>Education</i> was mentioned most frequently.
TO/THROUGH:	There was no majority view concerning roles. However, up to 10% of responses mentioned <i>Truancy Officers, School/Teachers, and Father/Mother</i> .
HOW:	There was no majority view. Up to 10% of responses mentioned <i>Sanctions/conditions</i> .

Comments

A number of responses appeared confused about whether the issue was getting children to school on a daily basis or preparing pre-schoolers to attend primary school. A wide range of suggestions offered in answering this question were also made in the previous issue and the two should be read together.

Role of the community

Locally based services were mentioned. It was suggested that volunteer support using retired people to act as truant officers, friendship club managers, or to patrol the streets looking for bullies would be useful.

Roles of parents and children

The role of parents was seen to be important and suggestions included: setting an example for their children; and showing pride in themselves and their presentation. It

was suggested that parents needed support not threats; and that support sometimes related to the threat posed by teenage children - particularly in sole mother families. Other support suggestions related to provision of information on appropriate “brain” food, bedtimes, homework planning etc. Parents were encouraged to accept the responsibilities of parenthood; to not be selfish; to personally deliver their children to and from school; and to follow the example of hardworking people in the community, eg Asians; and to realise that education was a privilege.

It was recommended that children needed to learn a range of important things including patriotism, pride in themselves, their school and their country. However, it was suggested they should not learn their rights until they were much older as this could frustrate their elders’ attempts to raise them appropriately. Other suggestions included: the need to learn respect, particularly for parents and teachers; to learn to sit still and to focus on one thing; to learn self-esteem and self-reliance, particularly when their parents were not good examples; and to learn positive thinking and understand that school is fun.

Role of government

It was suggested that government should ensure sufficient support for families with mental health problems; that families have adequate income, housing and access to necessary support services; that “bad” children be forcibly taken to school and kept there; that all education and support services be relevant to Maori and other ethnic groups; that schools be an interesting place for children to attend; that the cost of children's participation in extra-curricular activity not be a deterrent to low income families; and that affordable and accessible child-care be available to families before and after school, and during school in the case of working parents with sick children. It was also suggested that divorce should be harder to get.

There were responses that questioned the logic of cutting benefits for non-attendance at school, and how that might benefit the child. Others suggested beneficiary support should be more appropriately viewed as an investment. The question was also asked -if beneficiaries are to be punished by benefit cuts, what sanctions would apply to non-beneficiaries, for example, would they be fined?

Legal issues including sanctions and punishments

Legal and justice issues discussed included: a crack-down on the availability of drugs, eg no support for the legalisation of marijuana; restrictions on food colouring and food additives; and that schools should be more legally responsible for what children do during school hours. Other suggestions included: mandatory attendance at school; mandatory feeding of children; mandatory bedtimes, eg all children in bed before 8 am and no TV before 10 am; prohibition of drugs, alcohol, smoking, gambling, pets and closing of pubs and casinos; curfews during school hours, particularly on video parlours; and a much firmer approach by police to inappropriate teenage activity in public areas.

Hard line punishment was recommended for truancy, including: truants to come back to school on Saturdays and Sundays to make up time lost; offending parents being fined, publicly humiliated or imprisoned; and in all cases action/punishment to be swiftly administered. However, others felt that punitive measures were not warranted, that, for instance, teenagers can be difficult if not impossible to get to school if they don't want to go.

Targeting

On the issue of targeting, responses were varied. Targeting was seen sometimes to do more harm than good. In relation to targeting beneficiaries and their families, it was mentioned that some families were ashamed of their situation and children stayed away from school for that reason; others spoke of beneficiary families who have no problems getting children to school.

Bullying

Calls for measures to stop bullying were made. The impact of bullying on children's social development, their learning, their happiness and general well-being, was referred to in various ways. Dealing with bullying was seen to be one of the most effective interventions for the problem of getting children to school ready to learn. This extended to dealing with bullying outside school premises and on school buses.

Additional problems

There were responses that referred to a wide range of problems. These included: youth working for long hours after school on the one hand, and the need for youth to have access to work on the other; a range of examples of systemic failure, eg later developing children being stereotyped as slow and being left behind. Other issues were: the cost of books and musical instruments; watching TV instead of doing homework; and, for problem children, a lack of access to the help they need. There was a wide range of suggestions around solving the problems of hungry children, including: emergency packs; provision of food stamps or vouchers; provision of breakfast products; and the deduction of food costs from the benefits of offending parents. Caution was suggested on linking school attendance to benefit receipt, as children could use it to blackmail parents.

Pre-school preparation

Responses that were looking at pre-school preparation suggested a range of measures to get children well prepared for school. Specific programmes mentioned included: HIPPY; PAFT - particularly targeting the poor; Rudolph Steiner schools; and looking at the induction practices of exemplary schools such as Sunset Intermediate in Rotorua and Parkway College in Wainuiomata. It was also suggested that there

should be a national advertising campaign in early January to prepare and encourage new entrants.

Other suggestions of a more general nature included: more flexible kindy hours; availability of buddy systems at schools for say the first two months; the adoption of a national uniform; stopping approaches which treat all children the same; the return to visiting teachers (who visit the homes of pupils); provision of more male teachers; efforts to enhance friendly relationships between teachers and parents, including more convenient meeting times; a wider range of school topics to cater for all types of intelligence and interest; and longer summer holidays.

There were responses suggesting that children be prepared for school through things like pre-school testing; the provision of picture books for pre-schoolers; and learning skills development programmes for pre-schoolers. Another suggestion was that advancement through classes only be on the basis of successful completion of examinations and not age.

Supporting children already at school

In relation to children being well prepared and ready to learn once they were at school, responses focused on school provision of free and healthy food and drink. One response suggested planting fruit trees near schools so children could have access to healthy snacks. Similarly, responses suggested altering start and finish times of school, ranging from 7am to 9.30am for start times and from 3pm to 5pm for finish times. Included during those extended hours, were breakfast, naps, and a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Other suggestions for school curriculum included parenting and child-care. The value of singing, eg the national anthem, daily prayer and saluting the flag was mentioned. Additional measures such as homework sections in schools, nicer teachers, religious instruction including transcendental meditation (while others felt there should be no "New Age" stuff) were also suggested.

Partnership between parents and schools

It was suggested that this whole issue be approached as a partnership between parents, schools and the state - where responsibilities are clearly spelt out and appropriate action consistently taken. For example, schools should promptly notify parents of truant and/or ill prepared children and take some blame for non-attending children. Other suggestions were that schools should quickly identify the reasons for non-attendance and work with parents to resolve any issues. Another suggestion was a national database and tracking system to track children of transient families, particularly through the transition between primary/intermediate and secondary school.

Truancy Officers

Responses identified the role of truancy officer as important. Suggestions included: greater funding and powers for these officers; expansion of their duties to investigate ill-prepared children; and educating families to take troublesome children to school personally. It was also suggested that difficult children could be transported to and from school in a van.

Support needed to facilitate change

A need to change the overall attitude, of poor people in particular, to the value of education was mentioned. Suggestions included: more discipline in the home as well as in school; more teachers to enable smaller classes and therefore more individual attention for students; quicker response to the problems of children; a redirection of support towards academic performance and away from sporting excellence; encouragement and support of parents being in the home for their children - in particular in the first 5/7 years of their life. On a related note, it was suggested that children should be given regular opportunities to fill in questionnaires to give their views on their school's performance. Finally, there was a response that advised that the writer was sick and tired of taking responsibility for other people's children.

Getting enough sleep

A number of responses suggested: reintroduction of the Go to Bed Kiwi at a sensible hour; encouraging children to go to bed; and TV announcers announcing the relevant bedtimes for pre-school, primary and secondary school children. Closing pubs and winding back housie permits was also suggested.

Supporting other cultures

In relation to ethnic minorities, it was suggested that multi-lingual teachers be recruited with specialist skill in teaching ESL. The provision of books in the languages of cultures with oral traditions was also suggested. The use of marae-based schools for Maori and the availability of Maori language TV was mentioned. On the other hand it was also argued that excessive emphasis on ethnic values could distort the perception of students.

ISSUE SIX : YOUNG OFFENDERS

Question: How far should parents be held responsible for the actions of their children?

Parent Responsibility : Response Frequencies

The majority of responses answered this question. The most common theme, mentioned in at least 10% of responses, was that parents should be held *Completely* responsible for the actions of their children. Of those specifying an age-limit, *up to 16* years of age was mentioned most frequently. At least 10% of responses indicated that parents should be *Not completely* responsible. Up to 10% of responses gave reasons and qualifications.

Question: Should the courts have the power to make parents set curfews or attend parenting courses?

Curfews & Parenting Courses : Response Frequencies

The clear majority of responses answered this question and said *Yes*. At least 10% of responses said *No*. Up to 10% of responses gave reasons and qualifications.

Question: Should the age at which children can be prosecuted in Court for an offence be lowered? If so, to what age?

Age of Prosecution : Response Frequencies

The majority of responses answered this question and said *Yes*. At least 10% of responses said *No*. Up to 10% of responses gave reasons and qualifications. Of those specifying an age the most common theme, mentioned in at least 10% of responses was *10-12 years*. Up to 10% of responses mentioned *No age limit*.

Comments

Parental responsibility

On the issue of parental responsibility, responses provided views ranging from complete parental responsibility, through not completely responsible, to being responsible only for a few things, or in certain instances not at all. Comments relating

to the degree of responsibility included total responsibility being accorded to parents until the children were either working, had left home, or were no longer at school.

Responses that considered parents not completely responsible, gave reasons such as: it depended on the mental condition of the children, for example if they suffered from ADD. Other dependent conditions included the degree of parent supervision or negligence. A circumstance based or case by case approach was recommended. Other dependent factors included: the adequacy of available support; support services; the involvement of agencies such as CYPFS or schools; and the number and/or type of offences committed, for example whether the offending took place during the hours the child should have been at home. The degree of seriousness of the offending was another factor mentioned.

Responses referred in various ways to the idea that responsibility should be shared between the children themselves, family members and the community. Whether or not a parent was at home and whether or not sufficient income existed in the family to enable adequate supervision or support, were also raised as criteria for judging how responsible parents were. Other reasons included the number of broken marriages which were perceived to impact negatively on children involved. It was asserted that even good parents sometimes produce a bad child.

Role of government

Another reason cited for suggesting a lack of complete responsibility included, government action/inaction as causal factors, for example the removal of adequate safety nets, benefit-cut-related poverty etc. A further reason was recently diminished parental rights regarding discipline. In a similar vein it was argued that a poor example is set by government; for example, it was asked how responsible is the government for its ministers, and how responsible are its ministers for their departments and officials? Others referred to recent white collar fraud cases as poor examples for children.

Suggested support

The need for greater funding for youth activities and support services including suicide counselling was mentioned. Suggested measures included calls for changes to the Privacy Act, to enable adequate information-sharing with parents who have problem children. However, it was also asserted that the exercise was a total waste of time as parents with problem children were often criminals themselves. Other responses suggested alternative approaches like establishing a children's judicial system within schools, where under appropriate guidance children's juries could preside over child offenders.

Curfews

Positive views

The idea of court imposed curfews was discussed along with a number of reasons and or qualifications. These included: that it was a good idea which increased the level of control of problem children; that it has been demonstrated to work in places such as Christchurch, Te Kuiti and Hawaii; and that it is best if the courts impose the curfews to avoid the risk of undermining relationships with parents.

Yes but...

Qualifications included difficulties with enforcing curfews. Responses suggested using the full weight of the law, ie the police for enforcement, suggesting that offenders and their parents be sentenced to periodic detention. Others considered the use of police to be a naive suggestion given current demands on policing which could not be met. Respondents suggested a nationwide curfew for up to 18 year olds unless these children were with their parents. Other qualifications noted included the following: that out-of-court resolution of such issues was preferred; that while curfews could be useful this was only for certain age groups; that there would be value in having curfews for parents as well including requiring them to be with their children during curfews; that support for related services such as those provided by Judge Mick Brown and the Police was required ie more funding and/more power. Alternatives suggested included residential care; and doing nothing more, pending greater research into the issues.

Negative views

Those opposed to the idea of court imposed curfews were of the view that such measures could make matters worse; that they would often be simply ignored and were therefore a waste of time and effort; that very often such families are comprised of teens and parents who were all hopeless; that you simply couldn't chain teenagers to their beds; that they wouldn't stop law breaking; and that instead supervised youth centres could give young people somewhere to go and stay out of trouble.

Parenting Courses

On the subject of parenting courses respondent opinion was divided. Those in support suggested the use of judge's discretion to determine use; adequate funding of courses; that in addition to courses for parents the offenders would also need therapy; that both parents would have to attend; and that the courts should pay or that the parents should pay.

Ideas suggested

It was suggested that parental training needed to start earlier - before the birth of children - as a part of the school curriculum. The continued need for other support services was mentioned, including: transcendental meditation, Love In Action groups, Gain, Outward Bound type training, Discovery for Teenagers (Global Youth Foundation), Tough Love courses, and courses in anger management and relationship skills. It was suggested that such training be separate from voluntary training, that their needs were different, and that for Maori people the inclusion of Maori concepts, language and marae locations were important. Others said programmes should only be used if they could be proved to work.

Other suggestions included using ex policemen to "baby sit" while parents were on the programmes; and that overall a preventative rather than punitive approach be adopted.

Opposition to courses

Those opposed to the idea of courses cited compulsory training as a waste of time. Others suggested the training be for the offenders only, while yet others suggested the value of training at special camps for parents and children to learn together. More generally, responses mentioned the use of compulsory training as a source of further trouble in the family; that it penalised mothers while the father shot through; and that too often it involved over-paid counsellors who took no responsibility for outcomes.

Other reasons for rejecting the idea included: the view that by focusing on parental deficiencies the message was given to teenagers that their role/responsibility was somehow less; that such action was anti-Christian and inconsistent with the Bible; or that by the time children are teenagers it is just too late.

Lowering the age of prosecution

On the question of whether the age of prosecution should be lowered, it was suggested the removal of poverty should be the first priority. Responses suggested a range ages between 5 and 18 years of age. Other responses to this question suggested any age subject to the advice of police, judges, doctors or psychologists. The need to standardise an "adult" age for all purposes eg driving, drinking, voting etc. was noted, and a number of responses said, that in the instance of murder, age was irrelevant. It was also suggested that parents be sentenced along with the children.

Other ideas were that judges should rely more on wisdom than written law, while others said that judges live above society, ie they were out of touch. While not specifying a particular age, other responses cited other factors such as the individual child's development, case by case circumstances, and the seriousness of the offence. Others were in support of a lower age because it would stop gangs using current loopholes to recruit very young offenders. Other reasons were that by punishing very

young offenders appropriately, these young offenders could mend their ways and get on with their lives.

There were responses that suggested there should be no change to current age limits; that very young offending was essentially a cry for help by children. Others suggested: that there be no record of children's offending below the age of 17; that at the age of 14 children's records should be cleared; and that under the age of 20 teenagers should be placed in a borstal not an adult prison. Compulsory military training was suggested for repeat offenders or those aged between 16 and 18. For those less than 13, an alternative to the Youth Court was suggested that was less threatening. For those less than 7, family based resolutions we suggested, however, it was noted that very often dysfunctional families were involved in these cases.

Prevention and restitution

Suggestions made in relation to young offenders included: punishment which involved restitution and especially involving the parents for those under 10; the use of work schemes; the adoption of more preventative programmes with an early intervention focus, with Police Education Officers touring schools; and the value of more police out on the beat.

Sanctions and punishments

Severe penalties for a first offence similar to the New York zero tolerance policy were suggested. It was suggested Singapore be looked to for ideas. Other suggestions included: training offenders in arts, crafts or trade; ensuring the provision of youth secure units to allow offenders time out; and more Salvation Army homes which have worked well in the past. Others cited the negative influence of bad publicity by the media of poorly operating services, for example marae justice which doesn't start on time.

Other suggested measures included: treating 'bad' parents like criminals; taking children away from bad parents; taking young offenders to visit jails as in the USA; supporting culturally appropriate approaches for Samoan and Maori offenders, while others suggested there be no such measures for these groups; giving victims greater input; licensing parents; and providing buddy programmes for at-risk young people.

Funding

Adequate funding for a range of services including police, foster homes, family homes, half-way houses, and CYPFS, was called for. In relation to CYPFS, responses called for greater powers as well.

ISSUE SEVEN: SHARING PARENTHOOD

Question: What more can we all do to encourage fathers to play a more active part in bringing up their children?

Bringing up Children : Response Frequencies

The majority of responses answered this question.

- WHO: A majority did not specifically identify “who” should act. Of those who did, most indicated *Government*.
- WHAT: There was no majority view. The most frequently mentioned actions related to *Attitude/Approach*. At least 10% of responses mentioned *Education*.
- TO/THROUGH: There was no majority view. *Father/Mother* was mentioned more frequently than all others combined. *Children* were the obvious recipients.
- HOW: There was no majority view. At least 10% of responses mentioned *Educate/Promote*. Up to 10% of responses mentioned *Sanctions/Conditions, Do nothing, Compel/Enforce⁴²* and *Incentives*.

⁴² Legal requirement and strict/competent enforcement.

Question: Where parents are separated, what more can be done to support the rights of the child to have contact with both parents on a regular basis?

Parental Contact : Response Frequencies

The majority of responses did not answer this question. Of those that did...

- HOW: A clear majority did not specifically identify “who” should act. Of those who did, most indicated *Government*.
- WHAT: There was no majority view. The most frequently mentioned actions, mentioned in at least 10% of responses, related to both *Attitude/Approach* and the *Legal/Justice*⁴³ system in equal measure. Up to 10% of responses mentioned *Social Services*.
- TO/THROUGH: There was no majority view. At least 10% of responses indicated roles for *Father/Mother, Children, and Courts/Police*⁴⁴.
- HOW: There was no majority view. At least 10% of responses mentioned a *Case by case*⁴⁵ approach. At least 10% of responses said *Do nothing*.

⁴³ Acts of Parliament, the legal and justice systems, the penal system, police, courts, lawyers and the judiciary.

⁴⁴ People and facilities in the law enforcement and judicial systems.

⁴⁵ Dealing with cases on an individual basis rather than adopting a “one size fits all”.

Question: What else should the Government do to reinforce the responsibility of parents not living with their children to support them financially?

Reinforcing Parental Responsibility : Response Frequencies

About half of responses answered this question.

WHO:	A clear majority did not specifically identify anyone at all. Of those who did, most indicated <i>Government</i> .
WHAT:	There was no majority view. However, with the exception of changes to the <i>Legal/Justice</i> system, mentioned in at least 10% of responses, <i>Income</i> ⁴⁶ was mentioned more frequently than all others combined.
TO/THROUGH:	There was no majority view. At least 10% of responses mentioned <i>Father/Mother</i> , and more frequently than all others combined.
HOW:	There was no majority view. At least 10% of responses mentioned <i>Sanctions/Conditions</i> , <i>Compel/Enforce</i> , and <i>Do nothing</i> .

Comments

Concern over safety

First, there were responses that did not agree with the assumption that all fathers should have continued involvement with their children. It was suggested that nothing should ever be done that would jeopardise the safety of mothers and children; that it was simply better to get bad fathers out of everyone's lives, and that hopefully, there were relatively few such people.

Keeping families intact

Opinion was divided over the most appropriate approach to the issue of broken families. On the one hand responses suggested ways of trying to keep families together, focusing on the need to consider the impact of separation on all involved and particularly the children. On the other hand certain responses suggested ways of minimising difficulties during divorce or separation, focusing on maximising the harmonious division of family possessions and separation of children. Examples included fathers voluntarily continuing to support their families. Other responses

⁴⁶ Explicit or implicit reference to income and income support including adequacy/inadequacy of wages and benefits.

asked if non-custodial fathers have no influence over the children, or how the money is spent, why should they pay?

Suggestions for trying to keep families together included: the abolition of "no fault" divorce; making it legally more difficult to divorce; not reinforcing absentee fatherhood by government effectively taking the place of fathers through income support etc.; stopping payment of the DPB; rationalising benefits; not allowing mothers to move away with the children; offering tax breaks for fathers and mothers who stay together; and not supporting solo mothers but requiring their families to do this instead (as in Hawaii). Other suggestions included: abolishing single parent custody; legislating to prevent separation (except in cases of abuse) until children leave school; and repudiating all legal rights and benefits for de facto relationships.

Ameliorating separation difficulties

Other suggestions aimed at making separations less acrimonious were: ensuring income was available from assets if necessary, while separation negotiations proceeded; fathers paying child support directly by paying bills like school fees, or tertiary fees; changing the Domestic Violence Act to ensure fathers were treated as innocent until proven guilty; mothers not being able to change the children's names without father's permission; grandparents not being forgotten in any access arrangements; and the Courts ensuring fathers had fairer access and fairer child support arrangements.

Responses mentioned ways of minimising practical difficulties encountered when separation occurs. Examples were; the provision of facilities and support services such as child changing facilities in men's toilets; neutral drop off and access places such as the Supervised North Shore Access scheme; a parental liaison service; a Ministry for the Support and Care of Children; using unemployed people as monitors; and the provision by Income Support of a log book to record father involvement with children.

Payment of child support

In relation to child support, a variety of suggestions were made, such as: payments being made directly to families; levels being set in proportion to access granted; arrangements being fairer to second families; assessments being based on current not prior earnings; and average earnings, not including overtime, being used for calculations. Other responses suggested that quick recourse measures, such as the use of police, be available when access is denied; that helping not fining, was the most appropriate approach; that measures such as mandatory registering of father's names at birth, no income support penalties for stay-over visits, and having reciprocal rights with Australia to track down absconding fathers would also help.

Sanctions and punishments

A range of other suggestions made related to sanctions or punishments for offending fathers, such as: public humiliation by publishing their names eg. on the sides of milk cartons; sterilisation; jail; payment of bonds; Smartcard technology to identify and clamp down on abscondee; removal of upper income limits for child support purposes; seizure of assets; and closing self-employment/income minimising tax law loopholes (eg “my ex pays \$10 for six children, bought a \$40,000 new vehicle, says self-employed profit equals \$9,000); paying more if late with child support payments; having to live nearby, and computer checks at airports to stop fathers escaping overseas. Other measures of a similar nature were: reinstating adultery as a divorce factor; banning alcohol, drugs, gambling and closing all casinos, pubs and TAB premises; amending the Matrimonial Property Act to enable payment of 50% over time ie enabling the mother (usually) to keep the home and pay off the partner’s share over time; the family home going to the children and both parents having to come and go (not together); the family home going to the children, and the wife getting half the husband’s income in perpetuity.

Employers and Employment

Employers were seen to also have a role to play. Suggestions included: more flexible work arrangements and other measures designed to provide more family time, for example up to one year maternal/paternal leave that can be split between parents; a reduction in the hours able to be worked (as in France); a four day week for all parents; days off to attend children-centred activities; and children's days at the father's place of work on a regular basis.

Other employment related suggestions targeted more at the government were: the provision of a stable social and economic environment; full employment; adequate pay; and meaningful jobs to enhance self-esteem. In relation to income, responses called for an adequate level, and particularly to enable one parent to stay at home. Others suggested the creation of high paying jobs for women; getting rid of the Employment Contracts Act; and not changing laws which protect statutory holidays.

Education

Responses suggested educational measures such as: curriculum changes to incorporate parenting, child-care and better sex education; and better availability of courses like those provided by Ian and Mary Grant, Steve Biddulph and Laurie O'Reilly.

Justice and associated support services

Changes to existing legal services or approaches were recommended. These included: greater numbers of female judges, particularly in the Family Court; a review of the Family Court system (see the Trapski and Mason reviews); greater use of mediators rather than lawyers - a less adversarial approach; a children's ombudsman; the use of private companies and bounty hunters to track down and collect child support; more males employed in the Family Court; fewer "divorced feminists" in the counselling service; policies that enhance family well-being including getting rid of the Ministry of Women's Affairs. Ensuring all legislation is considered against the question "will this improve the lives of families?" was also suggested. Better example by Members of Parliament who were called on to raise their standards and to focus more on the role and responsibilities of fathers, than on rhetoric about solo mothers. A law, like in Australia, where men have to do half the housework was also suggested.

Other responses expressed the view that current laws bred resentment among fathers, and that resentful fathers were not good fathers. Similarly, that there is a pro-women bias in current law which needs changing, and that fathers should not be legislated out of their children's lives. A number of responses included detailed personal experiences with support agencies, expressing dissatisfaction with the extent to which staff and current regulations understood and/or contemplated their circumstances.

Role of government

Government was called on to fund a wide range of services and activities. These included: support groups for fathers; free health care; free entertainment and fishing passes; conferences on fatherhood; free and quicker court processes; transportation and phone calls for separated fathers and their children; adequate income support; courses on parenthood; locating absentee fathers; a Trust promoting good fathering in the Community; research into why families break up; free or cheaper supervised access; mediation services; research into the links between financial stress and violence (particularly as it relates to high child support payments); housing assistance for families seeking a new start; and courses and counselling for children.

Certain responses considered none of this to be the government's business, and that willing fathers who were making genuine efforts resented government interference. Others suggested various legal measures the government might take to improve matters, such as adopting the UN Rights of Children, promoting them as being of paramount importance, and laws to ensure that children are kept with parents of the same sex.

Role of men

Men were encouraged to do more for themselves. Suggestions included: placing greater emphasis on masculinity defined by fatherhood rather than their work or job; realising that the best thing a father can do for his child is love his child's mother;

forming support groups; being more responsible for their sexual behaviour, like learning to use condoms; being better role models and considering the longer-term consequences of their actions - particularly in wanting children not just sex. Men were also encouraged to consider joining groups such as "The Promise Keepers". Maori men (suggested by certain responses to have been disempowered by colonial rule) were called on to stop beating their women and treating them as second class citizens, as were men of other cultures who acted this way. A number of lateral-thinking suggestions were made, such as genetically altering men and lowering their testosterone levels.

Role of the family and community

A wide variety of measures relating to the community's role were mentioned. These included: parenting services and support groups; the support and promotion of marriage as the best option for raising children; rejection of the "hand out" mentality and instead support for being responsible for one's actions; and community abhorrence of absentee fatherhood, divorce and separation. Other responses called for an improvement in the way people viewed and treated house-husbands and single parents. Similarly, greater acknowledgment of successful solo fathers and an acceptance that in general modern fathers were doing better than their forebears. Other suggestions were a national Dad and Kids Day, a prize for the Dad of the Week, and promotion of weekly family gatherings involving games, a lesson or discussion, prayer and a supper.

A number of other measures involving mothers, parents, and grandparents were suggested. Some called for mothers to stop using their children against their fathers; for changing the way boys were raised; de-emphasising macho images; and emphasising "sensitive new age guy" values, like teaching boys that they will have an equal care-giving role and responsibility when they are fathers. Women were also encouraged to choose their potential partners more wisely on the basis of potential performance as fathers, while fathers asked to be treated less as villains and noted the fear they felt about accusations of sexual abuse for innocent contact with their children. Grandparents, as a source of support and assistance, were also mentioned.

Ideas for supporting fathers' involvement

The positive influence of a variety of people, principles and practices were recommended. An example was that paternal grandparents could provide a neutral and positive environment for both children and non-custodial parents. The value of teaching religious principles concerning family life was mentioned, as were spiritual messages such as those taught by the Maharishi Vedic and advocates of transcendental meditation/yogic flying. Similarly, there were responses which supported approaches that developed the "inner person" rather than those which focused on changing external circumstances. The positive influence of teachers was noted and particularly the need for more male teachers as role models. Other positive influences mentioned were older people in general, people in same sex marriages, and pre-marriage courses in parenting and related skills.

Other suggestions for mothers and fathers included fathers marrying the mothers of their children; women acting responsibly regarding the man's wish for children or not; women rejecting feminism; women learning how to love and obey, and to accept the role of leadership of fathers; to stop being martyrs and taking total responsibility. It was also suggested that the term 'parents' always be used rather than mother or father, to support the sharing of roles.

Settings

A range of issues relating to parental involvement in different settings were suggested, including: Dad's-only days at kindy; kindy during weekends to enable fathers to attend; mothers having a night out where dad can look after the family; the abolition of boy's-only schools; both parents being involved in school activities; schools sending both parents copies of children's reports; and a general increase in available time for fathers to play with their children. It was suggested that non-custodial fathers sometimes avoided contact with their children because they were ashamed of their poor circumstances.

ISSUE EIGHT : TRAINING AND LEARNING FOR EMPLOYMENT

Question: If the Government funds a person to do further education or training, what should the Government and the taxpayer expect of that person in return?

Cost of Training : Response Frequencies

The majority of responses answered this question. *Paid work/seek paid work*⁴⁷ was mentioned more frequently than all others combined. At least 10% of responses mentioned *Pay back*⁴⁸, *Complete/pass training*⁴⁹, and *Nothing*.

What groups of working age beneficiaries should be required to accept training opportunities?

Beneficiaries to Train : Response Frequencies

The majority of responses answered this question. The most common theme, mentioned in at least 10% of responses was *All working age beneficiaries*. The *Age group* mentioned most frequently was *up to 50 years of age*. Exceptions mentioned most frequently were *Not with young children* and *Unless incapacitated*.

Comments

Responsibilities of trainees

There were responses which considered it appropriate, that people assisted to do training seek and/or undertake paid work. Suggestions included: being willing to accept any offer to work even if not related to the training; being fully cooperative in finding work; and staying with a job once found. Related suggestions were: that trainees should not leave the country for a certain amount of time, eg 5 years; accepting work in any job in New Zealand, in the army, the police, and the fire or ambulance service; working for the dole; working in forestry; working for at least the same amount of time as the training; and coming off the dole within six months of completing training.

Other responses called for different measures such as: the successful completion of the training; learning something useful, and ideally in an area that the trainee is interested in; full attendance at the course; and trying really hard to achieve pass

⁴⁷ Reference to the need to do paid work, get a job, or make serious attempts to look for paid work.

⁴⁸ Reference to a requirement to pay back or be bonded for the costs of the training/education.

⁴⁹ Reference to completing training programmes and/or passing any relevant exams/tests.

results. It was suggested that tutors submit progress reports on trainees; that trainees sign a contract giving a commitment to the training programme, and show loyalty and dedication to the task.

Voluntary and community work

Other responses suggested doing voluntary work if paid work was not available, eg caring for elderly relatives or working in the community. Specific suggestions included: cleaning public places like beaches and walkways; culling possums or rabbits; tending public gardens; painting out graffiti; jury service; tending parks and cemeteries; visiting rest homes and helping older people; helping handicapped people, eg being teacher aids in schools; reading to hospital patients; slashing gorse or blackberry; helping the SPCA; seeding the roadside with clover to help honey production; planting trees; or helping with St John's "phone a friend daily" scheme.

Reimbursing government

Another theme was that people should pay back the cost of their training. A number of responses said that this should be required, even if the trainee had not got a job. An alternative approach suggested involved trainees working for a minimum period of time, or the costs/funds becoming a repayable debt. Other variations on this idea included: trainees being bonded to a specified employer, ie in the public service; using a revolving fund repaid by trainees and then on-lent to new trainees for their training; or if government could guarantee a job, then and only then would they be required to pay back the costs. Others suggested extending the student loan scheme to include all training and requiring some sort of bond or collateral as security against the costs of training. It was suggested that Government-provided student loans be low interest or interest free, and payable over a fixed period, eg five years. Other suggestions were: that repayments should only be made if results from the training were unacceptable; that ex-students stay and work in New Zealand - including University students; or that a large bond be required before travel overseas was allowed.

The contrary view expressed by responses was that nothing could be expected of trainees, because: usually there was no job at the end - which just caused further heartache; people repay in tax the costs of their training many times over; and the return to the community is a happier, healthier, better educated person and society. Others felt that all education should be free anyway, and that this generates more self-respect and enjoyment of life, and a responsible life-long learning attitude in the community.

Targeting categories of beneficiary

In response to the question about which groups of beneficiaries should be required to accept training, suggestions included: all those of working age, because everyone can learn from training; childless people and one spouse from two parent families; all long-term unemployed (more than six months); all ages, as age is really irrelevant (while

others suggested targeting by age); and spouses of any beneficiary except retirees (while others suggested there should be one law for all including superannuitants). Other responses argued that age should influence the type of training people undertook, and that training should be targeted appropriately to groups according to their specific needs. Others mentioned that many beneficiaries would appreciate training opportunities, while others suggested that most beneficiaries wouldn't go looking for opportunities.

Targeting issues

Practical difficulties with targeting were identified, and included: cost of transport; ill health; and the impact on overall employment levels, ie trainees replacing workers and therefore solving nothing. Others suggested: that everyone should be entitled to training and work, especially those with inadequate skills; that it would help many people to better their lot; that it would accomplish a lot of good in the community, such as cleaning up our cities; and that it could enhance work experience and work skills. Other responses took a different angle, suggesting that those in gangs, Maori protesters and the like, should not be trained, but penalised instead.

Younger beneficiaries

One group of working age beneficiaries identified by age, were those up to 30 years, especially those who had never had a job or who had no secondary school qualifications. Certain responses placed particular emphasis on school leavers and at-risk groups, like Maori. Suggestions for these groups included: compulsory military training; community work; and staying at school unless they had a job.

Middle-aged beneficiaries

Another age group mentioned was those between 30 and 50 years. There were responses that indicated that training when any older than 50 would be demeaning to one's dignity; that people would be too old to learn a trade after this, and that confidence would be gone; and that nobody gets a job after this age anyway. It was felt that people over 40 in particular, could better use their time in the community, and that retiring people earlier would free up jobs for the young. Another suggestion was that if people were still unemployed at 30, then army training to teach discipline and give self-esteem would be beneficial.

Older beneficiaries

A third age group mentioned was those between 51 and 65 years. There were responses that indicated people of this age were better suited to doing volunteer or social work. Examples cited included: helping out at schools; helping train younger people; and using their life experience to help younger unemployed develop the will to work. Other responses mentioned that this age group needed special help as they

were approaching retirement, and it was almost impossible to re-employ “oldies” like a 50 year old freezing worker or machinist or similar. Others also noted that such people were those most likely to be made redundant, particularly because of new technology. Other responses suggested that age should not be a barrier, asking, "what has age got to do with it?". They felt that all people, regardless of age, can and should learn. Other criteria such as attitude or prior learning was suggested instead, while others made reference to the longer lives being lived today, with improvements in health etc.

Domestic Purposes Beneficiaries

A wide range of comments were made regarding DPB recipients. Comments and suggestions included: cessation of DPB when the recipient’s child was aged 7 years; training for DPB recipients should increase gradually as children got older; that training could be part time, with funded child-care; or alternatively that there be no full time training for solo parents at all, particularly those with teenage children. Certain responses suggested free day care and tax cuts for DPB recipients who chose to work, while others objected to sole parents being labelled beneficiaries at all, because they worked very hard bringing up their children. Other responses suggested older women who have been full-time mothers and therefore out of the work-force for some time, were dis-empowered and often really struggle re-entering the workplace.

Invalid and Sickness Beneficiaries

Other beneficiary groups referred to included those on ACC, where it was suggested they might retrain, for light duties work, and that greater monitoring and investigation to identify fraudsters would probably help. Other groups mentioned were those on invalid and sickness benefits. While it was accepted that certain people clearly could not work or train, it was expressed that almost everybody can learn something, and that individuals could be re-tested regularly and perhaps train for work in jobs where their sickness did not matter, eg answering the phone, sorting mail etc.

Unemployed Beneficiaries

A number of responses suggested that the unemployed should always work or train in something, especially the long term unemployed, and particularly males. Those unemployed with qualifications should retrain to obtain different work, while no one under 21 years of age should ever receive either the dole or the DPB because parents and/or families should have the responsibility of supporting them. A problem mentioned related to abatement regimes connected with work/training/benefits, where it was often seen not to be worth pursuing work that did not pay significantly more than the benefit, or that was not long-term and secure.

Widows

A final group mentioned were widows. A number of responses called for preferential treatment for this group. Examples were: not including widows in training requirements, because this added insult to injury; and not forcing widows into work as this was considered harsh and lacking in compassion as it was not their fault that they were widows and they needed sufficient time to grieve. On the other hand, other responses asked why there was still a widow's benefit in these days of equal opportunity.

Exceptions

Exceptions to most of the above groups were mentioned in responses, such as those doing voluntary or community work, like caring for young children, sick family members or looking after aged dependants. The welfare of the young was considered of paramount importance, and certain responses expressed that motherhood was an important, full time job. Various other comments were made concerning the needs of children at different ages, and the need for parents to provide care.

Other exceptions related to those unable to work or train due to some handicap, incapacity or mental condition. Specific mention was made of those with genuine disabilities, physical or mental, and the suggestion made that they often feel too alienated and/or scared to be involved in mainstream activities such as training.

Education and student loans

A number of responses mentioned: the need to stop the brain drain through students going overseas to avoid paying their loans; that such loans were a drain on the resources of the poor and the young; that too much emphasis was being placed on the private-good benefits from education, and not enough on the public-good benefits, ie that the whole country was better off from having a better educated population; and the inconsistency between students (up to age 25) parents being income tested for a student allowance, while the UEB is given to 18 year olds regardless of parental income.

Do nothing

Finally, there were those who suggested that nothing should be done because current law and practices were sufficient. Suggestions included: employers/business interests should provide training and stop avoiding higher waged workers through employing the young and unskilled; that certain beneficiaries simply did not want to work or train; that schooling should have been adequate; that the right groups are currently being targeted and worked with, but that more enforcement was needed; and that further effort in this area would simply be a waste of time and money.

ISSUE NINE : WORK OBLIGATIONS AND INCOME SUPPORT

Question: What more can the Government do to encourage beneficiaries into work?

Encouraging Beneficiaries To Work : Response Frequencies

The majority of responses answered this question.

- WHO: A majority of responses did not specifically identify anyone. In those that did, *Government* was mentioned most frequently.
- WHAT: There was no majority view. The most frequently mentioned theme was *Employment*. At least 10% of responses mentioned *Income*, a change in *Attitude/Approach*, and *Availability*.
- TO/THROUGH: A majority did not specifically identify anyone. Of those who did, almost all mentioned *Beneficiaries*⁵⁰.
- HOW: There was no majority view. The most common theme was *Sanctions/Conditions*. At least 10% of responses mentioned *Incentives*.

Question: Is it fair to expect a working age beneficiary to take up part-time or full-time work or training, when they have the ability to do so?

Is it Fair : Response Frequencies

The clear majority of responses answered this question and said Yes. Up to 10% of responses gave reasons and at least 10% of responses made qualifying statements.

⁵⁰ Those receiving income support from the state eg people receiving DPB, UB, Sickness, Widows, Invalids benefits or ACC etc., but not including those receiving NZ Superannuation.

Question: Should a person on a benefit long-term who cannot take up part-time or full-time work be encouraged to do things such as community service?

Encouraging Community Service : Response Frequencies

The clear majority of responses answered this question and said Yes. At least 10% of responses said No. Up to 10% of responses gave reasons and at least 10% of responses made qualifying statements.

Comments

Role of government

Responses suggested that the issue of unemployment had been analysed and reported on many times, and that government should just look at those earlier reports and implement their recommendations. It was suggested that government policy created unemployment, and that the unemployed should therefore not be punished. The value of considering successful overseas experience like the “Irish model” was also mentioned.

Responses suggested changes in a number of attitudes and approaches. First, there was a need for government to understand that most people wanted to work, and that the treating of the unemployed with more respect and understanding was warranted. It was also suggested, however, that the development of a greater work ethic, starting in schools, was also needed. Other ideas included increasing the status of menial labour and reducing the stigma attached to community work.

Similarly, there was support for changing the definition of work, to include work done by volunteers, parents and artists, as they did “real work” too. Valuing and supporting the arts was seen as a way to improve creativity. Others suggested: that a more empowering approach rather than draconian measures would be far more helpful; and that threats and harsh measures were counterproductive; whereas helpful measures such as setting goals were entirely positive.

Other practical suggestions included: the creation of an employment labour pool; community service including “adopting” and helping a family in need; encouraging investment in the real economy, rather than the financial sector; funding to assist the self-employed, eg to purchase computers; creation of more jobs through government departments and big business taking on unemployed people; longer time allowable on Taskforce Green projects; payment of school sports coaches; more people being employed in the army, police and fire-service; and the reintroduction of PEP schemes and apprenticeships.

Other actions suggested specifically for government were: first to set an explicit goal of full employment; conducting more research into the causes of unemployment; and clamping down on immigration, while ensuring that highly qualified immigrants were not forced to take low grade work or the dole because of inadequately thought out immigration policies. Other suggestions were: that NZIS and NZES staff be more diligent; that the merger of the two organisations made good sense, or that they were best kept apart; to target at-risk locations, offering support services and training, including self-esteem courses, courses on motivation (Covey - Seven Habits of Highly Effective People), personal development courses (eg Life In The Balance-Prosper Dynamics) and neuro-linguistic-programming. Others suggested: that government should adopt a case by case approach to all unemployed people; that steps such as free medical checks for beneficiaries who could be suffering from malnutrition could help; and that government should stop wasting money and just accept that it had a hard core group of unemployed that would never change.

Fairness

A wide range of comments were made regarding issues of fairness, such as the message sent by treating petty criminals the same as the unemployed, using compulsory work schemes for both, and failing to differentiate between them (ie what is the difference between PD work and community service?) Others considered work for the dole schemes to be more trouble than they were worth, and a foolhardy measure given the current climate of dissatisfaction and lack of trust. Others questioned: how the "ability to work" would be defined; how someone on a long term benefit and unable to work could possibly undertake community service; while others stated that if community work was available, then it should be made into proper jobs and paid accordingly. Other fairness related comments included: the inequity of retired judges receiving \$1,000 per hour; tax payer unwillingness to fund what they saw as alternative lifestyles and the apparent lack of responsibility exhibited by certain beneficiaries; the fact that most women already work long and hard in their families and communities; and that why should beneficiaries be targeted when everybody should be encouraged to work in and contribute to the community. On this point it was suggested that those who did community work should get preference when job opportunities arose.

Other responses in discussing fairness issues called for sanctions on those in receipt of benefits, including: restrictions on travel; access to alcohol, drugs, passports and video parlours. Concerns expressed included the fear that beneficiaries may not be able to get free time for job interviews, or that being forced to work in jobs for which they were over-qualified might jeopardise future opportunities. Other responses saw that intellectual and physical disabilities were legitimate exemptions, but that otherwise work for the dole was a way of paying something back to the community. Alberta, Canada was cited as an example of a successful work-for-the-dole scheme.

Maori issues

Responses mentioned needs of the Maori community, in particular: support for programmes such as Wahine Ahuru and Hikoi Kaipae-Rangi; iwi organisations

encouraging and supervising beneficiaries to look for work; and policies being more relevant to Maori. Others called for less emphasis on Maori culture in training.

Targeting specific groups

Responses identified a diverse range of groups to be considered, in policies aimed at getting more people into employment. In particular, they suggested targeting the younger ages first, ensuring that young people got a chance to work early and did not go straight from school on to the dole, eg people under 25 years work for the dole, while those over that age train. It was suggested that older people working takes jobs from younger people. Other suggestions included: more emphasis on older people having access to work; long term unemployed and Maori not being targeted ahead of others, because all unemployed need help; and that there needed to be a redefinition of work to include DPB recipients or mothers in general, because they were already working in the home and community.

Support for specific programmes

Specific programmes mentioned as being worthy of support included: Workbridge, Phoenix, Compass and HIPPY; while others suggested driving instruction provided by Income Support (because many jobs require driving licences); industrial trade camps; and church based community work. It was suggested that all training programmes needed to be NZQA registered.

Legal and justice issues

A change in current laws on a wide range of issues was called for, including: outlawing age discrimination in employment; raising of tariffs to create further employment; the idea of a 4-day working week and/or 10 weeks holiday a year to increase work opportunities; raising the school leaving age; tax breaks for employers to encourage them to employ more people; and reviewing the issue of "working in the black market". Also suggested were: legalising marijuana to increase the tax base; standardising legal requirements around the age of eligibility for student allowances and unemployment benefit; or getting rid of student allowances/loans altogether and not having allowances available for training unless they were directly linked to employment. Finally, it was suggested that the Employment Contracts Act be amended to make it fairer for both employees and employers, also full implementation of the Employment Equity Act.

Income and abatement regimes

A reduction in the abatement regime to encourage more part-time work by beneficiaries was suggested, as was: rationalising the whole benefit regime by creating a standard universal income entitlement which would be available regardless of employment circumstances; and providing additional supplementary benefits for

things like clothes to ensure beneficiaries could present themselves well dressed at interviews. Others suggested measures like beneficiaries entering into a contract with government for receipt of benefits; increasing consumption tax while decreasing income tax for everyone; and a greater difference between the legal minimum wage and the unemployment benefit. Similarly, one response noted: "unemployment benefit for couple with 3 children plus family support = \$445 divided by 40 = \$11.12 per hour. Means job must pay more than \$11.12 per hour for it to be worthwhile. Average wage for jobs about \$8-\$10 per hour so why work? Minimum wage should be \$11.50 hour."

Support for beneficiaries

Responses made a range of practical suggestions about meeting work obligations, including: mailing job information out to job seekers so that they do not have to come into the office; provision of cheap day care and child-care subsidies up to the age of 14; and provision of interview guidelines and transportation assistance including vouchers or better public transport. Other suggestions were: providing free sterilisation; ensuring sickness beneficiaries were given their operations in a timely manner to enable them to get back to work; decreasing benefits over time as an incentive to get work sooner; providing transfer loans for those needing to change locations; and using older people to supervise community workers.

Various services and facilities were suggested by responses including: the provision of marijuana centres to get people off drugs; housing for the poor; returning housing rentals to an income based formula; and creches. In relation to child-care it was suggested that employers play a greater role, not only in supporting workplace child-care but in provision of more flexible work arrangements.

Controlling benefit abuse

A number of suggestions were made in relation to concerns about benefit abuse, fraud, or related criminal activity. Certain responses suggested greater effort closing loopholes that allowed abuse; requiring beneficiaries to attend an office to collect their dole rather than having it direct credited; requiring beneficiaries to report at Income Support every day at 8 am to keep "work ready"; not paying benefits to known criminals, eg gangs; requiring drug addicts to undergo "detox" treatment; and not allowing sickness beneficiaries to drink alcohol while on the benefit. Others mentioned using a computer database to track beneficiaries and having greater access to the assets of beneficiaries. It was suggested that benefits might be reduced for those who chose to live in the regions where work was limited and beneficiaries losing the benefit after appearing in court twice.

Widows were seen as having special needs; for instance, that they should be allowed time to grieve, but that this could be monitored by doctors.

Advertising and promotion

Finally, the value of various measures such as the promotion of success stories on TV was mentioned. Similarly, the promotion of regional development and successes was considered important.

Specific concerns noted

It was suggested that unemployed people could work in the weekend keeping cities operating while full-time workers had more time off. However, the concern was also expressed that using unemployed people in work schemes could jeopardise jobs or give an undue advantage to businesses able to use beneficiaries. It was felt that the emphasis always needed to be on getting real work, rather than community service, training, or finding/using temporary work schemes.

ISSUE TEN : MANAGING MONEY

Question: Should people who repeatedly seek emergency income support be made to have free budget advice? If so, at what point?

Free Budget Advice : Response Frequencies

The majority of responses answered the first question and a clear majority said Yes. At least 10% of responses made qualifying statements and gave additional ideas. Up to 10% of responses gave reasons. Almost all responses to the second question indicated the 1st, 2nd or 3rd time emergency support was sought.

Question: Should the Government provide services to manage people's budgets? If so, under what circumstances? eg. If a person on a benefit keeps applying for special needs grants, but refuses budget advice, should their benefit be paid through a money manager until the problem is sorted out?

Managing Budgets : Response Frequencies

A majority of responses answered the first and third of these questions and said Yes. In both cases at least 10% of responses said No. Up to 10% of responses gave reasons and qualifying statements.

Comments

Insufficient income

In relation to the whole issue of beneficiary money management and emergency income support, responses said: budgeting was irrelevant because income levels were inadequate in the first place; it was doubted that any adviser could do better, because no one knows better than the poor how to get by on very little; that unless budgeting advice was received voluntarily the exercise would be a waste of time; and that negotiation and encouragement would be better options. On the other hand it was suggested that there was never any harm in getting advice, and that in the 1980's there were budget liaison officers within Social Welfare who beneficiaries were referred to with some spectacular results.

Role of government

There was criticism of government's and MPs own track record in managing their budgets. Similarly, government support for causal factors such as the availability of casinos and the promotion of LOTTO was criticised in responses. It was suggested that this whole area was not a government concern, rather that it belonged in the community. Another concern was that government agencies were already too busy, and that Income Support in particular couldn't handle any additional work without more money and more staff. It was felt that any additional money required to implement these ideas would be better spent simply increasing benefit levels and resolving the problem that way.

Intervention levels

In answer to the questions about at what point budget advice and/or money management services should be provided, a range of suggestions were offered. These included: the first, second or third time emergency income support was sought; depending on the time between requests; at the judgement of a financial adviser; after 10 applications; only when debts exceed \$1000; more than 4 times; until they learned to cope; once a year; when they come up on lists as bad debtors; when rent was over 50% of income; where the family was dysfunctional; when children were not being fed, clothed or kept healthy; or at any time when any beneficiary wanted it.

Improving support services

Suggested enhancements to the idea of providing budget advice, included advisers being people that beneficiaries could relate to: someone neutral like a JP; someone of the same race or culture; and mature unemployed as advisers, while others were opposed to the idea of using private citizens. Other ideas included: adopting a case by case approach; making the service available to everyone to encourage good budgeting habits generally; a campaign to promote the benefits of good budgeting; and making available an 0800 number to improve access to good budgeting advice. The use of a buddy system using other beneficiaries who coped well was also recommended, as were mentors. It was mentioned that there was a need to ensure: the process was not demeaning or judgemental; that red tape be minimised; that the money be paid to the wife instead of the wasteful husband; that a nominal charge be levied; and that a pilot should be undertaken before any nationwide moves were made. The availability of an ombudsman for users of these services was seen as an essential prerequisite.

Responses noted that budgeting advice was already available through organisations such as Enterprise NZ Trust, Waipereira Trust, churches, Salvation Army, Foodbanks, the Citizens Advice Bureau and the National Federation of Budget Advisers. It was asserted that these programmes worked well, and could be used more widely, but that government assistance would be required. It was also suggested that such budget advice could be provided through the use of television.

Difficulties

Potential difficulties were also identified. They included: people losing hope and feeling like failures who have no choices or control; advisers using their own unrealistic standards; difficulties if volunteer budget advisers had to work with people compelled to be there; and beneficiaries whose difficulties were caused by partners who were wasting their money, with the suggestion that both be required to attend advice sessions. Others recommended research into why people became so desperate, suggesting for instance that the proportion of income paid on rent, rates, mortgages and power was simply too much. Similarly, it was recommended that there be a return to State rents being no more than 25% of income. Other potential difficulties noted included: the inherent contradiction between the idea of compulsion and the theme of self-reliance being promoted by the code; the cultural obligations felt by Pacific Island people which put pressure on their financial circumstances; and the inconsistency of this idea with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Information issues

Responses noted that beneficiaries could be unaware of the full extent of their entitlements, and that this was a problem which Income Support needed to act upon. Further, that the poor who were not beneficiaries could also do with assistance, including budget advice. It was suggested that a positive outcome of close monitoring of beneficiary budgets could be that government and policy advisers become better informed on the adequacy of benefit levels, and that budget advisers could have input into relevant policy proposals. Others agreed with this, but expressed doubt about the willingness of government to listen if told that benefit levels were simply too low.

Alternative suggestions

A range of ideas were suggested as better alternatives to that recommended. These included: free contraception and work-skills training; benefits being paid directly to creditors; using vouchers instead of cash; reducing major costs of living, particularly rent; removing easy access to credit, especially credit cards; paying benefits weekly; using the TAB instead of Income Support as it had a better network; applying normal bankruptcy rules instead; simply increasing benefits to a more realistic level; copying Singapore; and teaching life-skills and budgeting early in life, ie in school.

Sanctions and punishments

A range of negative sentiments about beneficiaries were expressed in responses, and it was suggested that they needed both 'carrot and stick' measures to improve. It was mentioned that while a Christian community like New Zealand should care for the needy, beneficiaries also had a responsibility to stop being wasteful, for example, by purchasing new when second hand would do, or by spending their money on

gambling, drugs or alcohol. Similarly, it was suggested that the government had provided the money, and therefore had a right to check up and/or impose conditions.

Other suggestions were: abolishing emergency benefits altogether; requiring repayment of all emergency advances; making all emergency advances a charge on future benefit income; more use of District Court summary instalment orders; forbidding the purchase of expensive items and the use of hire purchase; compulsory selling of assets; and getting rid of unnecessary expenditure such as big dogs. It was suggested that beneficiaries needed to lower their lifestyle expectations and focus on needs not wants, and that incentive measures like paying a bonus if no supplementary assistance was requested for a year, might work.

ISSUE ELEVEN : KEEPING OURSELVES HEALTHY

The two questions relating to this issue have been dealt with separately because there was little overlap in responses.

Question: What else can the government do to encourage people not to smoke, to eat healthier food, to exercise more and use alcohol only in moderation?

Encouraging Healthier Living : Response Frequencies

The majority of responses answered this question.

WHO:	A majority did not specifically identify anyone at all. Of those who did, most indicated <i>Government</i> .
WHAT:	There was no majority view. At least 10% of responses mentioned <i>Education</i> and <i>Health</i> . Up to 10% of response mentioned <i>Attitude/Approach</i> .
TO/THROUGH:	Most responses did not specify roles. However, up to 10% of responses mentioned <i>School/Teachers</i> , <i>Everyone</i> and <i>Children</i> .
HOW:	There was no majority view. The most common theme, mentioned in at least 10% of reponses was <i>Educate/Promote</i> and <i>Sanctions/Conditions</i> . At least 10% of responses mentioned <i>Do nothing</i> . Up to 10% of responses mentioned <i>Incentives</i> .

Comments

Role of government

A number of responses called on Government to support or oppose various measures. These included: opposition to fluoridation; vaccination; 7 day trading and genetically altered food. A related suggestion was that genetically altered food should be required to be labelled as such. Certain responses suggested the government should not do anything about these issues, that instead they should just let smokers and drinkers die because it would save money. Others recommended: rejection of the use of alcohol at official functions and the use of juice instead; not running hospitals as businesses; forbidding the sale of second grade meat; and not paying benefits to smokers or drinkers, or ACC to drunk drivers.

A wide range of anti-drink-driving measures were suggested which did not appear to address the questions asked.

Specific proposals

Government was called on to: enforce existing laws; use disturbing advertisements similar to the drink/drive ads to target smokers; show "big" people on posters doing exercises; subsidise stop smoking patches; tax people on body weight; lower the price of milk to be less than coke; stop increasing the price of smokes which just causes more worry and therefore more smoking; bring back compulsory military training; bring back apples and milk in schools; ban junk food in school tuck shops; free nationwide clinics for women; include nutrition and biology in the school curriculum; privatise health care and make private health insurance compulsory for all, with smokers and drinkers having to pay considerably higher premiums; decrease the price of healthy food by reducing GST; provide vouchers for specific foods to all beneficiaries; annual check-ups for older people; and prompt action on operations affecting mobility to keep older people active and out of hospital.

It was also suggested that State-run residential schools could be used during school holidays to teach reading, child-care, nutrition and gardening to whole families at risk; that they could use the gym, pool and sports fields for recreation, and that tertiary students could be offered summer jobs at these places.

Support for services

Measures the government was called on to support, included: health farms; alternative health practices; research into why people smoke, drink and eat to excess; helping addicts to kick their habits (funded by taxes on tobacco and alcohol); weight loss programmes; family leisure and exercise activities, particularly tramping huts, gyms, swimming pools and reducing the tax on exercise equipment; cheaper housing; government run healthy food outlets; and a requirement to identify the proportions and types of fat in food, were also recommended, as was the adoption of the Ottawa Charter.

Targeting

It was suggested that targeting at-risk groups would be effective. A range of groups were identified, including: Maori; Pacific islanders; smokers; the overweight; producers of unhealthy products, rather than consumers; community service card holders; and parents who supply children with alcohol.

Issues for Maori

In relation to Maori, measures recommended were: culturally relevant solutions; innovative targeting of the young; group discussions; and marae-based cheap food cooking classes. Mention was also made of the failure, so far, in preventing young Maori women from smoking.

Issues for churches and spirituality

A range of spiritual issues were considered important to health. Responses considered a lack of spirituality to be a root cause of poor health. Remedial action suggested, included: having a day of rest and reflection; the promotion and adoption of spiritual values; practice of tai chi; and explaining the relationship between the body and spirit, that the body is God's temple and should be cared for accordingly.

Role of the community

A range of community focused suggestions were made. Measures included: the availability of nutrition classes; food garden competitions; and sponsoring helpful programmes such as "Breaking the Habit". Other responses considered this issue an individual responsibility, suggesting that nagging or preaching only made matters worse, and that it was up to individuals to buy and use healthy food etc. Another suggested that it was a miserable world and that we might as well just let people be happy.

A range of other practical suggestions were made, which included: incentives for exercising such as cheaper doctors' fees for those who do not smoke, drink and who do exercise; incentives for gardening in the form of cheaper equipment/seeds; inter-business sports competitions; company exercise periods like they do in Japan; the promotion of exercise rather than just watching elite athletes on TV; frightening people with the costs of bad health in their later years if they don't act now; "Smokeless Days"; healthy food guides provided free to beneficiaries in at-risk areas; more "green" prescriptions, ie doctors prescribing exercise rather than drugs; improving the healthiness of take-away food or discouraging its consumption; reducing working hours and exercising instead; supporting programmes such as Dare, Outward Bound and a "Keep Fit and Healthy Day"; no lifts in high rise office buildings; and reducing the competitiveness of school sport, focusing instead on personal futures and having fun.

Sanctions and punishments

Punitive measures suggested, included licensing or banning the following: smoking; alcohol; gambling; home brew kits; television advertising of child-targeted junk food during child TV hours; alcoholic ice blocks; prescriptions of Prozac; and multi-national purveyors of junk food. Similarly, prescription-only access and restrictions on purchase volumes of cigarettes and alcohol were recommended. Other suggestions included: liberalising alcohol to encourage moderation; accepting that alcohol was the number one drug problem and acting accordingly; only selling alcohol and cigarettes in the same outlets as all other drugs; making alcohol freely available but only if needed by alcoholics; reducing alcohol content in liquor; requiring smokers to sign for cigarettes every time they were purchased; compelling the consumption of meals with all liquor; and returning to the 6pm closing of pubs.

Questions: What can we all do to make sure that people with early symptoms of psychological problems seek help?

Psychological Problems : Response Frequencies

The majority of responses answered this question.

- WHO: A majority did not specifically identify “who” should act. Of those who did, most indicated *Government*.
- WHAT: There was no majority view. The most frequently mentioned actions related to *Health*. At least 10% of responses mentioned *Availability, Attitude/Approach* and *Funding*.
- TO/THROUGH: There was no majority view. At least 10% of responses mentioned *Health Professionals*. Up to 10% of responses mentioned *At risk groups*⁵¹, *Whanau/Family*⁵² and *Everyone*.
- HOW: There was no majority view. At least 10% of responses mentioned *Educate/Promote*. Up to 10% of responses mentioned *Monitor/Prevent*.

Comments

Role of the government

Wide-ranging suggestions were made concerning actions government might take. Amending the Human Rights and Privacy Acts were suggested to improve information access for families, helping them to support suffering family members. On the other hand, a number of respondents expressed concerns about ensuring patient confidentiality. At another level, certain responses mentioned the need for focusing on the causes of mental illness rather than just the symptoms, suggesting that societal/systemic failure was a root cause. It was suggested that Public Service departments employ more compassionate people. Examples cited were that society and its systems lacked aroha and a spirit of support.

⁵¹ Those at risk of poor outcomes eg usually indicated by low income, unemployment low educational attainment, poor housing and/or poor health status.

⁵² All family members including extended family, grandparents etc.

Practical support from government

Practical measures suggested included: more research into causes of mental illness; implementation of the Mason Report; the provision of two kinds of facilities, one a retreat for stress-related disorders, and second a secure facility for chemical disorder sufferers. Other suggestions were: regular medical checks for everyone, every one to five years, and that such checks be refundable through the tax system; free sterilisation for mental health sufferers and their parents; more naturopaths and homeopaths; more child psychologists in schools; and greater discussion in schools on subjects like teen suicide and the role of alcohol and drugs in mental illness, particularly targeting young men.

Other health management issues raised, included: ensuring mental patients were unable to have access to guns or cars; ensuring patients were securely locked up and not allowed out; allowing dope to be grown for own use but not for dealing (others disagreed with this); specialists only and not GPs prescribing for mental illnesses; and that GPs be compelled to refer all mental illness to specialists.

Funding

Greater funding was called for to assist in providing a variety of services, beginning with the mental health service in general, and improving its accessibility and quality for everyone. This was seen by respondents as vital for improving people's confidence, as too often people were turned away or nothing happened. Similarly, respondents mentioned the regular opening and closing of mental hospitals and wards as causing confusion and a lack of confidence in the system. Funding suggestions included more money for: more doctors and nurses; free or subsidised counselling and drugs ("\$100 to see a psychiatrist is a lot when you only get \$300 a week"); clinics dealing with drug, alcohol and gambling addictions, where it was suggested that access needed improving, including being open on Saturdays; funding for the treatment of post natal depression; Workbridge; more special needs teachers; more health workers rather than administrators; free Prozac; and four hours of free housekeeping every week to relieve stress on care-givers.

Role of the community

A wide range of measures for the community were suggested, such as: people generally befriending sufferers and encouraging them, showing love, ensuring they maintained their pride and dignity, encouraging self-help and positive thinking; making people more responsible for themselves; and health insurance companies including mental illness in their "can pay for" list. Similarly a buddy or mentor system was suggested where the mentor would look out for the rights of the sufferer. It was suggested that sufferers should not be placed in the community because the care just wasn't there. On the other hand it was expressed that community placement was a good idea, while yet others said that a better balance between the two was needed.

Role of the media

The sensationalising of mental illness by the media was abhorred by respondents. On the other hand, the potentially positive role the media could play through advertising and informing the public was noted.

Role of parents and the community

It was suggested: that parents should seek to constantly affirm their children throughout their lives; that influential people, such as teachers, never put others down or say/do anything to diminish their self esteem. Others suggested the value of demedicalising mental health, removing the stigma attached to it, and seeking to generally normalise it in the eyes of the wider community.

Role of the churches and spirituality

Suggestions of a spiritual nature were made, including: prayer (particularly to rid sufferers of demons); love; meditation; and a general emphasis on improving spiritual health.

Improving reporting processes

Responses called for easier processes to report suspected sufferers, like an anonymous 0800 help-line, a discreet investigation service, and people that listen to you, acknowledge your efforts, and do not condemn.

Support for families

A range of suggestions were made about families taking greater responsibility for the welfare of members. It was suggested; that parents should be listened to more, as they know their children best; that greater awareness of early symptoms from early childhood could be gained by training parents; and that a greater awareness of the channels available for help and reporting was needed. More self-help groups like the AA, psychiatric services for youth, and even sports groups were believed to be helpful.

Employers and employment

A number of work-related proposals were made including: greater support for Employee Assistance Programmes in the workplace; reducing work-related stress by having a shorter working week; more work being available for everyone; and ensuring ACC eligibility for work-related mental health problems.

Finally, while it was suggested that people really needed help, there were responses that said this was very difficult because everybody has some symptoms and who wants to admit that they might be crazy.

STATUS OF THE CODE

People had two opportunities to respond to these questions, either by ticking a circle and/or writing a comment.

Question: Should the Code be:

- Published as a statement of government policy?
- Passed into law to influence the development of policy and new legislation?
- Set out as guidelines without being in law to influence the development of policy and new legislation?
- Put into relevant sections of existing legislation, such as the Social Security Act?

Status of the Code : Response Frequencies

No clear picture emerged from this question as a whole or within any part of it, with approximately equal weighting given to *Yes*, *No* and those who did not respond to the questions.

Comment:

This section relates to any written comment made on the status of the code.

Comment on the Code : Response Frequencies

The majority of responses did not make a written comment on the status of the code. Of those who did at least 10% of responses mentioned *Issues for Government*. Up to 10% of responses mentioned *Government performance*, *Responsible leadership*, and *Equitable/positive environment*. At least 10% of responses said *No code*.

Comments

Of those responses which did include additional comment, most were about matters relating to the eleven issues already addressed, and are therefore reflected in their respective summaries. Only new comments, and specifically relating to the “status of the code” are included below.

Legislation

Responses referred to various legislative issues, including: the need to ensure simple, understandable legislation in any code; the value of educating before legislating; that a review of code issues after say three years and before legislating would be preferred; that a revisiting of existing legislation, like the Human Rights Act, to ensure compliance and appropriate emphasis would also work; and a warning not to over-legislate.

Resources

A number of responses focused on the resource implications of a code, noting that most resources went to a disproportionately small number of chaotic families, and that unless adequate resources were applied, any code would be a waste of time.

Citizenship and the balance of rights and responsibilities

There were responses that referred to the rights and responsibilities of a range of groups, arguing that: any code must be for everyone and not just beneficiaries; that everyone needed to be reminded of their responsibilities to themselves, their family, the community and nation as a whole; that Government had no mandate to do such things, that instead they should be promoting debate on what New Zealand citizenship means; and similarly, that because free will was so important to New Zealanders, Government should not be making New Zealand like Singapore or China where freedoms and rights were more restricted.

Moral and ethical considerations

Finally, moral or ethical considerations were mentioned by a number of responses. They included: the proposed code being contradictory to Christian belief, viewing life as transactional, not valuing the dignity and value of all; that it was morally wrong for a code to impose on people who lived independently of government benefits; that more vision and idealism was needed in government policy, and not rigid ideology; and that Moses had a similar code, and authorities are still struggling to enforce that one.

Another comment was: He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tangata, he tangata, he tangata (What is the most important thing in the world? T'is people, t'is people, t'is people).

GENERAL COMMENTS ON DISCUSSION PROCESS

This heading was used on the coding sheet to gather views on the discussion document and process.

Discussion Process : Response Frequencies

The clear majority of responses did not make a general comment that could not be captured better under a specific issue⁵³. Of those that did, at least 10% of responses made a *Comment on process*. Most were *Negative*. Up to 10% gave reasons.

Up to 10% of responses contained an *Exceptional idea*⁵⁴. Most related to *Issue Three: Keeping Children Healthy*.

Comments

Positive

A number of responses indicated satisfaction with the discussion booklet; in particular, that it was an excellent booklet with neat statistics, that would be valuable for teaching; that the facts were all set out in a clear way; and that it would be good to encourage debate.

Similarly, there were positive comments about the response process itself. It was suggested that it was good to be involved, and that it was responsible of government to find out what people were thinking. However, the suggestion was also made that a multi-choice form would have been easier to complete.

Negative

There were also responses that indicated dissatisfaction. Concerns were expressed about the tone and presentation of the booklet; that it was patronising and offensive (particularly to solo fathers and beneficiaries); and that the money would have been better spent in a range of other ways including on health, education and feeding hungry children.

⁵³ See coder instructions in the technical appendix where coders were required to record the answer under a specific issue if possible.

⁵⁴ Coders were asked to look out for responses that identified new ideas or details on new ways of doing things that would be particularly useful for policy development work. It was agreed that the original responses would then be sent through the departments working on these issues with only the general flavour to be captured in this report.

Other concerns were: that the booklet represented negative populism and scape-goating; that there was too much reading in it; that the wording was politically incorrect; that it was shallow and shoddy; and that the content was variously moralistic, vindictive, punitive or opportunistic.

Certain responses indicated concern about: the length and complexity of the questions on the response form, that it was confusing and had contradictions in it; that the questions were seen as being “loaded” and ambiguous; and that overall it was too hard to answer and would be hard to analyse.

Methodology

A number of responses focused on concerns about the methodology used, and whether the results could be valid given sampling shortcomings. A level of cynicism was evident, particularly around whether or not results would be published, with a number of responses expressing concern about whether the form they had put several hours into writing would ever be read. Government was encouraged to make the results public.

Finally, there were responses that suggested completing the response form was good therapy, and had allowed people to get many things off their chest.

RESPONSES FROM SUB-POPULATIONS

Summary

The results of the tick and text data responses were tabulated against the demographic data to see whether there were any notable differences in the responses from different demographic groups. There were notable differences between results from the sub-populations and the results of the respondent population as a whole in about half of the questions on the response form. These differences were most marked in responses from the “group” category. Responses from this category on closed questions tended to go in the opposite direction from responses from other sub-populations and from the respondent population as a whole, and the proportion of negative “group” responses was notably higher than that from other sub-populations and from the respondent population as a whole.

NZ Asian respondents were more supportive of the expectations and a legal approach to the code than the respondent population as a whole. A wider gap was evident between the responses of NZ Asian respondents and NZ Maori and NZ Pacific Islands respondents, both of whom tended to be more negative than the respondent population as a whole.

Finally, there were no notable differences between the results by gender and the respondent population as a whole, or between the genders.

Analysis of sub-population results

Respondents were given an opportunity to provide a few basic demographic details. These were:

- Whether the response form was completed by an individual, household or member of a group.
- The gender of the person/s filling in the response form.
- The age bracket of the person/s filling in the response form.
- The ethnicity of the person/s filling in the response form.
- The approximate size of the group (if applicable)
- The name of the group (if applicable)

The unit of analysis is a response form, rather than a person. Therefore, in addition to the earlier warnings about the use of this information, additional concerns apply to this section because of the loose data collection method. For example, it was quite legitimate for a response purporting to come from a household or group to have ticked both genders and a range of ethnicity groups and age brackets. It was also legitimate for an individual respondent to have ticked a range of ethnic groups.

Just as the total number of people who responded to the discussion document cannot be calculated, neither can the number of men or women, or the number of people in any of the age brackets or ethnic groups. The following information relates purely to the number of response forms with the particular boxes ticked.

What can be ascertained, however, is whether an individual or a household/group responded. In relation to the latter, these are mentioned together because there appears to have been a number of households who ticked the “group” circle⁵⁵ instead of the “household” circle.

Finally, the quantitative results (the number of boxes ticked) are not linked directly with any particular statements made in the qualitative, descriptive comments in this report - with the exception of the responses in Chinese. However, the scanned response sheets will be able to be interrogated later by researchers wishing to look at the actual comments made by respondents according to demographic characteristics. The Chinese comments are reported under the section on ethnic groups because they will not be available in the scanned data because of problems with scanning non-standard forms as described in the analysis section.

The raw data is available for further analysis. What is reported here is only a broad summary of any notable differences between the responses of a sub-population and the responses of the respondent population as a whole. *“Notable” is defined as a difference of ten or more percentage points.*

Two types of difference are described:

- notable differences between the response sub-population and the respondent population as a whole; and
- notable differences between sub-populations. For example between the responses from respondents in the youngest age bracket and the responses from respondents in the oldest age bracket.

This analysis of the information by sub-population is done from two data sets; the “tick” data from the circles on the response form, and the “text” data from the response form. The two different types of analysis are described in the “Methodology” section.

⁵⁵ The total number of responses that had the group circle ticked was 3498, however, 17,351 responses had the circle ticked indicating a group size of 2-10.

Tick analysis

General overview

The clear majority of responses came from a combination of individuals and households. There was very little difference between these groups and the overall respondent population. There were also no notable differences either between the genders or between either of the genders and the respondent population as a whole. For this reason no gender analysis has been done in this report.

Notable differences occurred on every tick question between “group”, ethnic groups, and age groups. Differences also occurred within ethnic groups.

The Proposed Code

Do you support the expectations?

There were two optional circles to tick. It was possible to tick both circles.

The proportion of NZ Asian respondents who ticked the “support” circle was notably higher than the proportion of responses from the respondent population as a whole and was more than double the proportion of the “group” respondents that ticked “support”.

The proportion of “group” respondents who ticked the “oppose” circle was notably higher than the proportion of responses from NZ Pacific Islands respondents which was in turn more than double the responses from the respondent population as a whole.

Any other important expectations?

The proportion of “group” respondents, NZ Pacific Islands respondents, NZ Asian respondents and “other” ethnic group respondents who ticked the “yes” circle was notably higher than the proportion in the respondent population as a whole.

Status of the Code

Published as a statement of government policy?

The proportion of NZ Asian respondents who ticked “yes” was notably higher than the respondent population as a whole who ticked “yes”. The proportion of “group” respondents who ticked “yes” was notably lower than the respondent population as a whole, and half or less than all ethnic sub-population respondents who ticked “yes”.

The proportion of “group” respondents who ticked “no” was notably higher (more than double) the respondent population as a whole who ticked “no”. The proportion of those in the under 25 age group, the proportion of “group” respondents, NZ Maori respondents, NZ Pacific Islands and “other” respondents who ticked “no” was notably higher than that of the respondent population as a whole who ticked “no”.

Whether the code should be passed into law?

The proportion of NZ Asian respondents who ticked “yes” was notably higher than the respondent population as a whole who ticked “yes”. The proportion of “group” respondents who ticked “yes” was notably lower than the respondent population as a whole and around one quarter of the NZ Asian respondents who ticked “yes”.

The proportion of “group” respondents who ticked “no” was notably higher (almost double) the respondent population as a whole who ticked “no”. The proportion of those in the under 25 age group, the proportion of “group” respondents, NZ Maori respondents, NZ Pacific Islands respondents and “other” respondents who ticked “no” was notably higher than the respondent population as a whole who ticked “no”.

Whether the code should be guidelines?

The proportion of “group” respondents who ticked “yes” was notably lower than the respondent population as a whole who ticked “yes”.

The proportion of “group” respondents who ticked “no” was notably higher (more than double) the respondent population as a whole who ticked “no”. The proportion of respondents in the under 25 age group, the proportion of “group” respondents, NZ Maori respondents, NZ Pacific Islands respondents, NZ Asian respondents and “other” respondents who ticked “no” was notably higher than the respondent population as a whole who ticked “no”.

Whether the code should be in relevant legislation?

The proportion of NZ Asian respondents who ticked “yes” was notably higher than that of the respondent population as a whole who ticked “yes”. The proportion of “group” respondents who ticked “yes” was notably lower than the respondent population as a whole and around one third of the NZ Asian respondents who ticked “yes”.

The proportion of “group” respondents who ticked “no” was notably higher (more than double) the respondent population as a whole who ticked “no”. The proportion of respondents in the under 25 age group, the proportion of “group” respondents, NZ Maori respondents, and NZ Pacific Islands respondents who ticked “no” was notably higher than the respondent population as a whole who ticked “no”.

Text analysis

General overview

Because the clear majority of responses came from a combination of individuals and households, there was very little difference between these groups and the overall respondent population. There were also no notable differences either between the genders or between either of the genders and the respondent population as a whole.

Notable differences only occurred, and then only on some issues and questions, between the “group” responses and the respondent population as a whole; between the age groups and the respondent population as a whole; and between the ethnic groups and the respondent population as a whole.

Group Responses

The raw data contains information on the “groups” as a whole and also gives information on the reported size of groups. The information used in this report is extracted from responses that had ticked the “group” circle. Some of those who ticked the “group” circle may have been “households” - this was sometimes ticked as well.

An important caveat around the use of “group” data is that, as discussed in the “Methodology” section of this report, there was a period where the public believed that only a sample of individual responses would be read, but that all group responses would be read and analysed. This may well have prompted some respondents to claim group status when they were not. *Overall, information in this section needs to be treated with considerable caution.*

Notable differences were evident in connection with half of the questions on the response form. These were found in: responses to the questions on: the proposed code; pregnancy care; keeping children healthy; learning for the under 5s; young offenders; training and learning for employment; work obligations and income support; managing money; status of the code; and general comments on the discussion process.

The Proposed Code

Do you support the expectations?

The first difference noted is that “group” respondents had a larger proportion opposed to the expectations than supported them. This was the opposite of the total respondent population, where a larger proportion supported the expectations than

opposed them. The proportion of “group” responses that opposed the expectations was more than double that of the respondent population as a whole, and the proportion of “group” responses that supported the expectations was notably smaller than that of the respondent population as a whole.

There was a notably higher proportion of those among the “group” respondents who provided reasons why they supported or opposed the expectations than the respondent population as a whole.

Any other important expectations?

There was a notably larger proportion of “group” respondents who mentioned additional *Expectations of government*, and also mentioned expectations of *Responsible leadership*, than the respondent population as a whole.

Looking after our children

What steps to encourage good parenting?

The proportion of “group” respondents who mentioned social services and funding, was notably higher than the respondent population as a whole who mentioned the same issues.

Pregnancy care

Should the government encourage good pregnancy care?

The proportion of “group” respondents who said “yes” was notably lower, and the proportion of “group” respondents who said “no” was notably higher, than the respondent population as a whole.

Keeping children healthy

Should Income Support encourage parents on benefits to take their children for immunisations and child health checks?

The “group” respondents reversed the trend of the total respondent population in that a larger proportion said “no” than said “yes”. In addition the proportion of “group” responses that said “no” was notably higher than the respondent population as a whole. The proportion of “group” responses that said “yes” was notably lower than the respondent population as a whole.

Should up-to-date immunisations be required for entry to early childhood education?

The “group” respondents reversed the trend of the total respondent population in that a larger proportion said “no” than said “yes”. In addition the proportion of “group” responses that said “no” was notably higher than the respondent population as a whole. The proportion of “group” responses that said “yes” was notably lower than the respondent population as a whole.

Getting children to school ready to learn

Should parents who receive a benefit, as a condition of benefit, be required to get their children to school?

The “group” respondents reversed the trend of the total respondent population in that a larger proportion said “no” than said “yes”. In addition the proportion of “group” responses that said “no” was more than double the respondent population as a whole. The proportion of “group” responses that said “yes” was less than half that of the respondent population as a whole.

Young offenders

How far should parents be held responsible for the actions of their children?

The proportion of “group” responses that said “completely” was notably less than the proportion of the respondent population as a whole that said “completely.”

Should the courts have the power to make parents set curfews or attend parenting courses?

The proportion of “group” responses that said “yes” was notably less than the proportion of responses from the respondent population as a whole that said “yes.” In addition the proportion of the “group” responses that said “no” was notably higher than the proportion of responses from the respondent population as a whole that said “no”.

Should the age at which children can be prosecuted in Court for an offence should be lowered?

The “group” respondents reversed the trend of the total respondent population in that a larger proportion said “no” than said “yes”. In addition the proportion of “group” responses that said “no” was notably higher than the respondent population as a whole. The proportion of “group” responses that said “yes” was notably less than the respondent population as a whole.

Work obligations and income support

What more can the Government do to encourage beneficiaries into work?

The proportion of those mentioning *Employment* among the “group” respondents was notably higher than the respondent population as a whole who mentioned *Employment*.

Is it fair to expect a working age beneficiary to take up part-time or full-time work or training when they have the ability to do so?

The proportion of those saying “yes” among the “group” respondents was notably lower than the respondent population as a whole who said “yes”.

Should a person on a benefit long-term who cannot take up part-time or full-time work be encouraged to do things such as community service?

The proportion of those saying “yes” among the “group” responses was notably lower than the respondent population as a whole who said “yes”. In addition the proportion of those saying “no” among the “group” responses was more than double the respondent population as a whole who said “no”.

Managing Money

Should people who repeatedly seek emergency income support be made to have free budget advice?

The proportion of those saying “yes” among the “group” responses was notably lower than the respondent population as a whole who said “yes”. In addition the proportion of those saying “no” among the “group” responses was notably higher and more than double that of the respondent population as a whole who said “no”.

Should the Government provide services to manage people’s budgets?

The proportion of those saying “yes” among the “group” responses was notably lower than the respondent population as a whole who said “yes”.

Should people who repeatedly apply for special needs grants have their benefit paid through a money manager until the problem is sorted out?

The proportion of those saying “yes” among the “group” responses was notably lower than the respondent population as a whole who said “yes”. In addition the proportion of those saying “no” among the “group” responses was more than double that of the respondent population as a whole who said “no”.

Status of the code

The proportion of “group” respondents who specifically stated “no code” was more than double the respondent population as a whole who specifically stated “no code.”

General comments

The proportion of “group” responses making negative statements about the code discussion process was notably higher than that of the respondent population as a whole.

Age-group responses

The raw data contains information on the total range of possible combinations of age groups; for example, those responses which had respondents both under 25 and over 75. For this report only the composite data has been used. The age brackets were:

- under 25;
- 25-49;
- 50-74; and
- 75 and over

Notable differences were evident on around one third of the possible questions on the response form. These were found in responses to the questions on: pregnancy care; keeping children healthy; learning for the under 5s; young offenders; training and learning for employment; and work obligations and income support.

Pregnancy Care

Should the government encourage good pregnancy care?

The proportion of respondents under 25 who said “no” was more than double the proportion of respondents aged 75 and over who said “no”.

Keeping children healthy

Should Income Support encourage parents on benefits to take their children for immunisations and child health checks?

The proportion of respondents under 25 who said “no” was more than double the proportion of respondents aged 75 and over who said “no”. Similarly, the proportion of 25 to 49 year old respondents who said “no” was also more than double the proportion of respondents aged 75 and over who said “no”.

Should up-to-date immunisations be required for entry to early childhood education?

The proportion of those saying “no” was notably greater among respondents under 25 than among respondents aged 75 and over.

Learning for the under 5s

How could the government encourage parents and other family members to support their children’s learning?

The proportion of those mentioning *Education* was notably greater among respondents in the younger age groups (under 25 and 25-49) than among respondents aged 75 and over.

What can be done to support children’s learning in the earlier years?

The proportion of those mentioning *Education* was notably greater among respondents in the 25-49 age group than among respondents aged 75 and over.

Should parent education services be targeted more to families with the greatest needs?

The proportion of those saying “no” was notably greater among respondents in the younger age groups (under 25 and 25-49) than among respondents aged 75 and over.

Young Offenders

How far should parents be held responsible for the actions of their children?

The proportion of those saying “completely” was notably greater among respondents aged 50 and over compared with respondents aged under 25 saying “completely”.

Should the age at which children can be prosecuted in Court for an offence be lowered?

Only half as many respondents aged 75 and over said “no” than the proportions of respondents saying “no” in the younger age groups (under 25 and 25-49).

Training and learning for employment

Which groups of working age beneficiaries should be required to accept training opportunities?

A notably smaller proportion of respondents aged 75 or over said “all working age beneficiaries” should be required to accept training opportunities when than the proportion of respondents saying that in the 25-49 age group.

Work obligations and income support

Should a person on a benefit long-term, who cannot take up part-time or full-time work, be encouraged to do such things as community service?

More than double the proportion of respondents aged 75 or over said “no” than the proportion of respondents saying that in the under 25 age group.

Ethnic group responses

The ethnic group data was collected for the following groups:

- NZ European respondents;
- NZ Maori respondents;
- NZ Pacific Islands respondents;
- NZ Asian respondents; and
- Respondents of “Other” ethnicity.

Where “other” ethnicity was given it was recorded and analysed during the text data capture/coding process. The majority of “other” respondents were European respondents or Asian respondents (as distinct from NZ European or NZ Asian). In this report these are not analysed separately but included as part of the “other” category.

Notable differences were evident in about half of the questions on the response form. These were found in responses to the questions on: the proposed code; pregnancy care; keeping children healthy; getting children to school ready to learn; young offenders; work obligations and income support; and managing money.

The Proposed Code

Do you support the expectations?

The proportion of NZ Asian responses supporting the code was notably greater than that of “Other” respondents, NZ European respondents, NZ Maori respondents, the total respondent population as a whole, and more than double that of NZ Pacific Islands respondents.

The proportions of NZ Asian respondents, NZ European respondents, and the total respondent population as a whole who opposed the expectations, were notably less

than the proportions of “Other” respondents, NZ Maori respondents, and NZ Pacific Islands respondents who were opposed.

Pregnancy Care

Should the government encourage good pregnancy care?

A notably higher proportion of NZ European respondents said “yes” than the proportions of NZ Maori respondents and NZ Pacific Islands respondents who said “yes.”

Keeping children healthy

Should Income Support encourage parents on benefits to take their children for immunisations and child health checks?

There was a notably higher proportion of “yes” responses and less than half the proportion of “no” responses from NZ Asian respondents than the proportions of NZ Pacific Islands respondents which gave “yes” and “no” responses closer together.

Should up-to-date immunisations be required for entry to early childhood education?

There was a notably higher proportion of “yes” responses and a notably lower proportion of “no” responses from NZ Asian respondents than the proportions of NZ Pacific Islands respondents which gave “yes” and “no” responses closer together.

There was a notably higher proportion of “no” responses among NZ Maori respondents, NZ Pacific Islands respondents, NZ European respondents and “Other” respondents than the proportion of NZ Asian respondents saying “no”. The proportion of “no” responses among “Other” respondents was also more than double that of NZ Asian respondents saying “no”.

Getting children to school ready to learn

Should parents who receive a benefit, as a condition of benefit, be required to get their children to school?

There was a notably higher proportion of NZ European respondents and NZ Asian respondents answering “yes” to this question than the NZ Pacific Islands respondents saying “yes”.

Young offenders

How far should parents be held responsible for the actions of their children?

The proportion of those saying “completely” was notably greater among the NZ European respondents compared with NZ Pacific Islands respondents and NZ Asian respondents saying the same thing.

Should the courts have the power to make parents set curfews or attend parenting courses?

The proportion of those saying “yes” was notably greater among NZ European respondents than the proportion of NZ Pacific Islands respondents, NZ Asian respondents, NZ Maori respondents, and “Other” respondents saying the same thing.

Work obligations and income support

Is it fair to expect a working age beneficiary to take up part-time or full-time work or training when they have the ability to do so?

The proportion of those saying “yes” was notably greater among NZ European respondents than NZ Maori respondents, NZ Pacific Islands respondents, NZ Asian respondents, and the proportion within the respondent population as a whole saying the same thing.

Should a person on a benefit long-term who cannot take up part-time or full-time work be encouraged to do things such as community service?

The proportion of those saying “yes” was notably less among NZ Pacific Islands respondents than NZ European respondents, NZ Maori respondents and “Other” respondents saying the same thing.

Managing Money

Should people who repeatedly seek emergency income support be made to have free budget advice?

The proportion of those saying “yes” was notably greater among NZ European respondents than the proportions among NZ Maori respondents, NZ Pacific Islands respondents and NZ Asian respondents saying the same thing.

Should the Government provide services to manage people’s budgets?

The proportion of those saying “yes” was notably greater among NZ European respondents than the proportions among NZ Maori respondents, NZ Pacific Islands respondents and NZ Asian respondents saying the same thing.

Should benefits be paid through a money manager where people are repeatedly seeking special needs grants?

The proportion of those saying “yes” was notably greater among NZ European respondents than the proportions among NZ Maori respondents, NZ Pacific Islands respondents and NZ Asian respondents saying the same thing.

Qualitative data summary of Chinese responses

The following represents a summary of the text information provided on those forms that were responded to in Chinese. The summary was provided by the coders who translated the forms directly on to the English coding sheet.

Overview

Chinese respondents expressed concerns about two areas in particular, namely education and social responsibility.

Education

Chinese respondents indicated that more attention should be paid to the education of children, but that the responsibility largely lies with the parents themselves as opposed to the government or any other group. This was particularly evident in responses to the issues of “learning for the under 5s” and “getting children to school ready to learn.”

Little comment was made about the effectiveness of the present NZ education system. Any failings were seen to be on the part of the parents.

Young offenders

Chinese respondents tended to feel that parents should hold the most responsibility for the actions of their children. A typical answer would read “Parents should carry most of the responsibility” or “Parents should be held about 80% responsible.” A number of responses indicated that responsibility should be divided three ways - parents, school and society.

A number of responses were in favour of lowering the age at which a child could be prosecuted; usually to between 10 and 13, with the suggestion that children at that age are old enough to know the difference between right and wrong and so should be treated as adults.

Sharing Parenthood

A typical response of Chinese respondents was to say “encourage parents not to separate (for the sake of the children)”.

OVER-ARCHING THEMES

This section identifies and discusses themes that became apparent when looking across the whole database from two perspectives:

- *The **range** of themes that were evident across issues, regardless of how often they were mentioned in relation to any one issue.* These themes were of two types: those identified in the first phase of content analysis and incorporated into the coding sheet scheme used; and those not incorporated into the coding sheet but which arose out of the data during the later analysis of all the written material in the supplementary comment book.
- *The **frequency** of themes that were identified across issues, and mentioned by at least 10% of all responses to any one question.* These themes were also of two types: those identified from the original “tick circle” frequency counts; and the frequency counts of themes that were coded onto the coding sheet.

Range

Code sheet themes

The initial content analysis (in the code sheet development process) identified the range of ‘coding themes’ used to subsequently analyse all responses. This resulted in a number of options for coding responses to the questions: who (should act); what (should be done); to/through whom; and how; being the basic framework used to code responses to most open-ended questions. In addition, a small number of similar frameworks were adopted to capture answers to very specific questions involving usually yes/no or similar answers. The full range of options is presented in the separate technical appendix.

Without exception, all ‘coding themes’ were identified in the responses to every open ended question⁵⁶. That is, each option for who, what, how, etc., was found in the range of responses answering *all* open ended questions. A very broad range of options was provided and it is an indication of both the diversity of views expressed in responses and the relevance of the coding scheme used that the full range of boxes were ticked.

Supplementary book themes

The supplementary book was provided to coders to enable them to capture the particular detail of responses beyond that provided by the coding sheet definitions. Again, the extraordinary diversity of responses came through in the large amount of additional information captured in the supplementary book process. The collated supplementary book, after duplications had been removed, ran to almost 300 pages of

⁵⁶ This finding arises out of an examination of the frequency tables included in the data set appendix which records the number/percentage of responses which mentioned each coding theme option.

ideas, views and opinions⁵⁷. While a number of these could be described as relatively orthodox or logical, there were also a number of responses that were clearly “outside the square”.

Overall, a very wide diversity of views characterised question responses, and particularly in response to questions like “what can we all do...?” Similarly, in the question on ‘what other expectations might be included in a code’ there were a very broad range of responses, particularly linked with the role of government. These ranged from management of the natural environment through to concerns about the acceptability of abortion being a factor in society’s difficulties in protecting children. As another indication of the breadth of views, there was also a reasonably lengthy agenda of issues for churches to consider under this heading.

Frequency

Tick circle themes

Tick circles were only provided for the two questions on the expectations and the status of the code. Overall, no clear consensus could be identified in relation to the status of the code. The combination of a relatively high “nil” response with almost equal “yes” and “no” responses, plus about one percent of responses with both boxes ticked, indicated a widely divergent range of views.

In relation to ‘other expectations’ there was a much clearer picture, with a clear majority of responses supporting the expectations given, and around equal numbers of “nil” and “no” responses. On this question, both “yes” and “no” were ticked on about two percent of responses.

Text data themes

The second set of overview themes identified were those mentioned by at least 10% of responses to any particular open-ended question⁵⁸. These were only able to be determined for those themes incorporated into the coding sheet scheme used, ie the ‘coding themes’, as the frequencies for any others were not available.

For example, the theme of *Income* was mentioned by 10% or more of responses in only two out of a possible 15 open-ended questions asked. On the other hand, *Government* or *Expectations of Government*, were mentioned by 10% or more of responses in 11 out of 15 open ended questions asked.

⁵⁷ The full listing from the collated supplementary book is included in the data set volume.

⁵⁸ This finding also arises out of an examination of the frequency tables included in the data set appendix which records the number/percentage of responses which mentioned each coding theme option.

The themes are:

Theme	Coverage ⁵⁹
<i>Government/Expectations of government</i>	11
<i>Educate/Promote</i>	8
<i>Father/Mother</i>	7
<i>Attitude/Approach</i>	6
<i>Education</i>	6
<i>Health</i>	3
<i>Sanctions/Conditions</i>	3
<i>Funding</i>	3
<i>Income</i>	2

The only other themes mentioned in at least one question by a minimum of 10% of responses, were: *Availability; Compel/Enforce; Employment; Incentives; Children; Beneficiaries; Health Professionals* and *Do nothing*. In no other instance than those noted above were any coding themes mentioned by more than 10% of responses.

The relative weighting of these themes needs to be considered alongside the issues covered in the discussion document. For example, there were three issues that were quite specifically health related: Pregnancy care, Keeping children healthy and Keeping ourselves healthy. This may account in part for the higher scoring of *Health* over, say, *Employment*. However, the overarching theme of *Government and Expectations of government* and the emphasis of *Education* and educative approaches came through strongly. It is interesting to compare this with *Sanctions/conditions*, mentioned less frequently, and *Compel/enforce*, mentioned only once.

The relatively high score of *Attitude/approach* also picks up on a particular issue raised by the coding team; that is the number of times words like “encourage” and “support” were used in responses rather than more directive words like “make people” and “people must/should”. These softer approaches were usually coded under *Attitude/approach*. Under this heading, exhortations to think differently and tackle problems and issues in different ways were coded. That societal attitudes to birth control, materialism, drinking and smoking, and many other things needed to change, is a common theme that runs through the data.

Finally, the varied references made to income were also notable, particularly in relation to expectations which depended significantly on resource availability. For example, parents working or spending time with children and the ability of families to survive on a single income so that one parent could remain at home with the children.

⁵⁹ Number of questions in which the theme was found, out of a total number of fifteen open ended questions asked.

Other Themes

A number of additional themes were identified in the analysis of text data sourced from the supplementary book. These arose out of grouping the comments according to common themes. Some of these themes were the same as those on the coding sheet, and under which the data was originally classified and coded. However, a number of alternative themes or sub-themes also emerged which were subsequently confirmed using the qualitative analysis software, “Nud*ist”.

Using Nud*ist, a text and phrase search was conducted on the text data base, and the following additional themes were located within text responses to all or most of the thirty open ended and closed questions asked:

The themes are:

Theme	Definition/Context	Coverage <small>⁶⁰</small>
<i>Punishment</i>	The use of and preference for punitive measures to punish those who ‘break the rules’.	30
<i>Media influence</i>	The perceived power and influence, for good or bad, of mass media.	29
<i>Moral or ethical values</i>	The power and influence of morals and/or similar important beliefs.	28
<i>Ban/banning</i>	Banning of socially undesirable practices or places.	25
<i>Absenteeism & bullying</i>	Two recurring problems affecting youth education and development.	24
<i>Drugs</i>	The prevalence and consequences of use/abuse of mood altering substances.	23
<i>Violence</i>	The increased prevalence and negative consequences of all forms of abusive behaviour.	23
<i>Debts</i>	Prevalence and negative consequences of financial debt.	18
<i>Gambling</i>	The increased prevalence and negative consequences of gambling.	13

The text search reports which enabled the above summary are included in the unpublished data set material. It describes the scope of the ideas or concerns expressed in responses; for example, that the “punishment” theme is found somewhere

⁶⁰ Number of questions in which the theme was found, out of a total number of thirty questions asked.

in all of the questions, while “gambling” is clustered around those questions which deal with broad improvements to society as a whole (the expectations), or dealing with very specific problems with some perceived causal link to gambling, eg managing money, beneficiary status, and some aspects of getting children to school ready to learn. Specific details are contained in the data set.

Summary

Overall, what comes across most strongly is the diversity of responses and associated ideas and views. In considering prevalent themes, responses favoured roles for government in achieving the expectations and also appeared to favour an educative rather than legislative or punitive approach.

PRINT MEDIA ATTACHMENTS

A number of responses included attachments containing supplementary information to the main response. Sometimes these attachments were clippings from various print media, eg newspapers and magazines, and were cited or referred to as supporting the response.

A brief summary of the range of published media articles is contained in the unpublished data set. They can be grouped into the following categories:

- Methodological criticism
- Code content discussion
- Philosophical criticism
- Concerns about the needy
- Specific issue comment
- Letters to the editor (published)
- Leadership criticism

In addition a number of religious publications were received that indirectly addressed the issues in the discussion document. These are also included in the unpublished data set.

CONCLUSION

The distribution of the discussion document and invitation to submit feedback has generated a wealth of information for policy analysts and researchers to consider. Placing to one side issues of data representativeness, one of the significant strengths of the consultation and data generation process followed has been that a wide range of relatively unmoderated views and ideas have been obtained direct from members of the public on a number of highly complex issues.

Analysts working with the feedback data will undoubtedly look for “good ideas” in the data set, particularly ideas where the relationship between the problem and potential resolution is relatively explicit, obvious, or well understood. While this is an appropriate and fruitful use of the data, there is a risk that other important ideas, not immediately presenting as potential solutions, will be missed.

The data from this discussion process is somewhat similar to the output from a brainstorming session. As is the case with brainstorming, many of the ideas generated appear at first glance to be of limited merit. For example, respondents variously suggested: that fruit trees be planted on the way to school to provide both exercise and healthy snacks for children; that cigarettes only be available on prescription; that pregnancy tests only be available in clinics and not over the counter; and that working hours be cut in order to provide more jobs. In each case, analysis would probably produce a range of reasons why the particular idea as suggested might not work, however, some variation on the idea, and its intention, might prove valuable.

It is significant in this context that such a large proportion of the responses came from individuals and families where the sort of critical analysis that usually takes place in group forums was less likely to have occurred⁶¹. However, the great benefit of this is that ideas were not killed at birth as so often happens in group discussions. In each instance the originator of the idea had some linkage or connecting principle in mind, however tenuous, when suggesting the idea in relation to the problem they sought to resolve.

Certainly these ideas and views bear thinking about in terms of the degree to which they might pinpoint areas of possible lack of alignment in current policy and/or services. This was raised by respondents in connection with:

- legal abortion and early pregnancy care/care of children generally;
- parents (usually mothers) being available to care for children, including teenagers who fall into the “young offenders” category, and being required to work; and
- the easy availability of most mood altering substances like tobacco and alcohol, while maintaining constant concern about the negative impact of these on the individual and society.

⁶¹ The downside of this was that a relatively large amount of confusing statements and misinformation was sent in response to the discussion document.

Respondents, often unaware of the myriad of considerations and constraints around the development and implementation of policy over many years, have suggested connections that may seem naive in their simplicity. However, instead of “throwing the baby out with the bath water” and rejecting such ideas in total, analysts have an opportunity to explore both the explicit *and* implicit relationships, linkages or connecting principles which lie within the data, and the potential options or variations of the same which may provide a range of creative and innovative policy solutions to the seemingly intractable problems raised in the discussion document.