



New Zealand Council Of  
Christian Social Services

## New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services Submission to the Productivity Commission Terms of Reference for Breaking the Disadvantage Cycle, August 2021

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| Organisation Name:        | New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS)   |
| Organisation description: | <p>The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on setting the Terms of Reference in relation to breaking the disadvantage cycle. NZCCSS has six foundation members; the Anglican Care Network, Baptist Churches of New Zealand, Catholic Social Services, Presbyterian Support and the Methodist and Salvation Army Churches.</p> <p>NZCCSS represents over 250 member organisations providing a range of social support services across Aotearoa. We believe in working to achieve a just and compassionate society for all, through our commitment to our faith and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Further details on NZCCSS can be found on our website <a href="http://www.nzccss.org.nz">www.nzccss.org.nz</a></p> |



## SUBMISSION & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INCLUSION IN TERMS OF REFERENCE

We support the Productivity Commission's plan to develop a Terms of Reference for this review that will explore how to correct the growing levels of inequality in Aotearoa, particularly in relation to persistent and entrenched poverty.

We know many of the organisations that we share a kaupapa with will have amply shared content, ideas and direction in relation to specific and with-in-system drivers, issues and challenges. We support them in doing so, but are using our voice to call for consideration of the system itself. We strongly urge the Commission to consider how this review could look beyond what is possible within the existing system, and to reimagine the entire system itself.

The economic and democratic systems that operate within Aotearoa are ineffective and harmful for those in persistent poverty. In order to ensure a fair, just and compassionate society, we need to explore a paradigm shift in Aotearoa.

**We propose that the Productivity Commission includes the following areas for investigation in the Terms of Reference:**

### **1. The urgent need for systemic change**

We feel that we are beyond the point where adjustments to the current system will create lasting or constructive change.

The current systems that government operates through were developed and implemented decades ago, and clearly are serving to further entrench the disadvantage they were intended to alleviate.

Consistent and on-going failures within government departments and ministries highlight that the system itself is failing.

It seems obvious that a massive overhaul is required with a fresh kaupapa, fresh operating practices and fresh voices.

### **Recommendation 1: Include exploration of systemic change.**

Systemic change is urgently required. There is a clear and entrenched disconnect between the policy-setters, policy implementers and those affected by and supporting persistent disadvantage.

NZCCSS strongly urges the Commission to reimagine and propose a system that is designed to meet the needs of people, and that reflects the values that underpin society in Aotearoa.



To assist with this, we recommend exploring and considering the work of:

- Max Harris in The New Zealand Project
- The research and findings emerging from Auckland University's New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study
- Human learning systems as a framework, with an accessible entry available [here](#) (Real World Report via [www.humanlearning.systems](http://www.humanlearning.systems) )

## **2. A systemic shift in economic policy**

Neoliberalism has entrenched gross disadvantage and persistent poverty. Our society privileges our economy over the needs of the people.

We need to reimagine and redesign our economic system fundamentally if we truly want to address persistent disadvantage.

### **Recommendation 2: Include exploration of economic change.**

We suggest the Commission propose exploration of new economic philosophies / models that privilege people, communities and our environment over the economy.

Within that we urge sub-review of the following specific areas:

- 1. Household incomes** – including exploring all avenues to ensure people in Aotearoa receive the equivalent of a basic living wage
- 2. Housing** – and the impacts accessing, living in and being excluded from create for those in persistent disadvantage
- 3. Food sovereignty / security** – we would direct you to the work of our partner organisation, [Kore Hiakai, Zero Hunger Collective](#).

## **3. Enacting Te Tiriti o Waitangi**

It is past time that we understood the impact that failure to enact Te Tiriti o Waitangi has had on our society.

### **Recommendation 3: Include enactment of Te Tiriti o Waitangi**

## **4. A sustainable, effective, valued peoples workforce**

Those who work within social services, health or education in Aotearoa generally do so due to personal passion.

However there are major challenges in this space that impact any chances of seeing change for our most vulnerable. And hamper efforts to shift levels of disadvantage from becoming ever increasingly entrenched.



#### **Recommendation 4: Include exploration of a sustainable, effective and valued peoples workforce**

We suggest the Commission propose exploration into the following areas in relation to the peoples workforce (social services, health and education).

**1. Remuneration of this workforce** – with the Government as the main funder of the peoples workforce, they have the ability to realign the income of the workforce to match that of other professional groupings.

Those doing this work have a huge impact on our societal functioning and wellbeing, and yet they continue to be paid well below other sectors with comparable qualifications, responsibility and risk.

This becomes an even larger issue, in that:

- a) We need the best and brightest working in these spaces, but low remuneration makes these sectors unattractive
- b) Many in these sectors are those who are themselves experienced in or experiencing persistent disadvantage. By having the sectors that they are well placed to work in poorly remunerated, we continue to perpetuate the issue
- c) Through devaluing this workforce through remuneration, we signal to society that those doing this work are low in social capital – thereby perpetuating the failure of attract our best and brightest to work in this space, and in the longer term, stifling innovation
- d) As remuneration stagnates and the cost of living increases, the existing workforce are migrating into other sectors or out of kanohi-ki-te-kanohi work, with a loss of knowledge, experience and relationships

**2. Training of the workforce** - Our tertiary education offerings have become generic in both content and purpose. In genericising educational offerings, we dilute the knowledge and abilities of our graduates. It is nearly impossible to complete a qualification outside of education that focuses specifically on tamariki and taiohi. And yet we know this is a crucial area of need.

There is an opportunity for the Commission to explore what would be needed to ensure our graduates are actually effective and well trained to meet the needs of those in persistent deprivation.

**3. Collaboration** – anecdotally, and through emerging research it can be seen that the best outcomes in this space are interdisciplinary. And yet due to decades of scarcity there is inter-sector posturing and protectionism that hampers collaboration. The workforce in this space is broad (teachers, nurses, social workers, counsellors, youth workers, diversional therapists, support / care workers, navigators, and many others), and yet through funding models, collaboration has been discouraged. In some cases, the existing funding model has driven some occupations within the sectors scope to become overly broad, and to minimise the role and function of other occupations.



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The best outcomes for those in persistent disadvantage occur through collaboration. This would be the perfect area for the Commission to explore.