



ANZASW Media release – Modernising Child Youth & Family

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Press Release: [Aotearoa NZ Association of Social Workers](#)

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At face value the Review of the Child Youth and Family Service aims to achieve what social workers would want, better outcome for children, says James Makowharemahihi, President ANZASW. However the emphasis on issues such as outsourcing services, investment approaches, core business, improved efficiency and collaboration suggest a reduction in the States response to meeting needs of vulnerable children and addressing root causes of abuse and neglect and transferring responsibility to the already stretched NGO sector or potentially the private sector as has already occurred with the running of prisons and is being muted for social housing.

The key staff group within Child Youth and Family Service are the social workers. This group of professionals are not mentioned in the Terms of Reference for the review and nor is there social work representation on the Review Panel. Also noticeable by their absence is the voice NGO social service providers, caregivers and New Zealand based children and young people. Who Cares? Scotland is an organisation representing young people in care but are they able to speak for Maori and Pacific young people living in New Zealand one wonders.

Child Youth and Family has been subject to review, restructuring, rebranding, realigning, reconfiguring and changes consistently over the last 25 years. The impact that constant change has on children, families and individuals is well known and documented. CYF Social Workers have continued to strive to work in the best interests of children and young people in spite of themselves being faced with constant change, often in a system that does not support delivery of high quality practice. This has been identified in a number of reports over the years, the most recent in 2014.

In 2000 Judge Michael Brown in his Report stated “current workload expectations on

staff [in Child, Youth and Family Services] are reaching the stage of being dangerous”. The Child Youth and Family Service 2014 Workload Caseload identified that process reporting through KPIs inhibited the ability of social workers to develop effective relationships with children young people and their family or whanau. The same report recognised that Child Youth and Family required an additional 356 social workers to deliver quality assessments.

If this review is to not tinker at the edges but improve outcomes for children and young people it must ensure that there is sufficient resourcing to enable social workers to work effectively with families and whanau.

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