

## ***Summary of the eighth Welfare Working Group meeting, 30 September 2010***

### ***The Day***

- Welfare Working Group business
- Options for youth at risk of long-term benefit receipt
- Maori and the benefit system
- Delivery of income support and employment services
- Sickness and disability

### **Welfare Working Group business**

The Welfare Working Group (WWG) agreed the minutes from their seventh meeting (22 September 2010), discussed the action points and noted the correspondence received since the last meeting. Members did not have any new interests to note.

### **Options for youth at risk of long-term benefit receipt**

The WWG considered options for youth at risk of long-term benefit receipt, following on from the discussion on this topic at their previous meeting. The WWG emphasised the importance of having clear goals for this group and keeping as many young people engaged in education and training as possible to best prepare them for employment. A key group to consider are those who do not achieve in mainstream education.

### **Maori and the benefit system**

Te Rina Leonard presented on Maori and the benefit system. She described the high levels of benefit uptake by Maori with particular emphasis on Maori women and young people. She identified the key barriers to Maori leaving the benefit system as low education, poor health, living in areas with few jobs and low uptake in childcare.

The WWG discussed the importance of improving education outcomes for Maori, in light of the fact that there is a significant increase in annual income rates for Maori with a level 4 or higher tertiary qualification. The role of early childhood education was also discussed, with particular reference to the role of Kohanga Reo.

Officials briefed the WWG on work Te Puni Kokiri has done to move Maori into jobs and the development of Whanau Ora initiative.

### **Delivery of income support and employment services**

The WWG discussed the delivery of benefits in New Zealand. The delivery of benefits was compared to the ACC model as well as models of delivery used in Australia and the United Kingdom. Key issues were the need to reduce the number of social service agencies that individuals with multiple issues have to deal with (the “five cars up the drive” problem), and how agencies can be best organised to achieve the desired outcomes.

## **Sickness and disability**

Following a presentation from the Secretariat, the WWG considered how beneficiaries' health and disability needs should be assessed. It was emphasised that beneficiaries need to be assessed for their work capacity, not just their health or disability conditions. Reference was made to ACC's Better at Work programme discussed at an earlier meeting (19 August 2010).

There was discussion of the assessment processes recently introduced in Australia and the United Kingdom.