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## Advancing refugee research

*More research is needed on the experiences of refugees in New Zealand, says a leading researcher in the field.*

Waikato University Associate Professor Bernard Guerin, co-organiser of New Zealand's first symposium to focus on refugee research, funded by SPEaR, said there was a need to improve the knowledge base about refugee communities.

"Refugee communities are very diverse, from a range of ethnic and language groups and with varying education levels. There cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach to refugees in New Zealand. Improving our knowledge of these diverse communities will assist our understanding of them as recent New Zealanders, and also better inform how we can work alongside to assist them to participate in New Zealand society," he said.



*Bernard Guerin*

Bernard said the symposium, held late last year, definitely helped by bringing together the majority of New Zealand's researchers in the field of refugee research. It also included representatives from refugee communities and provided them with opportunities to participate and develop their research skills. It was co-organised with Unitec and the New Zealand Immigration Service, and supported by funding from the SPEaR Linkages programme. "For the first time, all those people were in the room together for two days and were able to network outside of the usual context of getting resources and service delivery for refugees. This has set the research moving. That alone has made the symposium successful - people met others they had not been able to meet before, though they may have been aware of their work."

"The networking that occurred at the symposium opened up opportunities for mentoring and subcontracting, which will help build capability, especially in building the capacity of refugee communities to research themselves," Bernard said.

The two main presentations were on the *Refugee Voices* and *Strangers in Town* research projects (see p.3).

Symposium papers and a research kit produced from the event are available at [www.waikato.ac.nz/wfass/migration/links.shtml#refugeecon](http://www.waikato.ac.nz/wfass/migration/links.shtml#refugeecon) or via [www.spear.govt.nz](http://www.spear.govt.nz)



# Chair's comment

*SPEaR's Chair Professor Richard Bedford affirms the relationship of some well known clichés to social policy research and evaluation.*

Collaboration is key, one size does not fit all, and integrated processes deliver real outcomes. This "one-liner" captures the essence of what I want to convey in this comment, reflecting on issues the social policy, research and evaluation communities face going forward.

Experience suggests that fostering an integrated strategic approach to research and evaluation is critical for achieving successful policy outcomes. We need to add knowledge to the dialogue and decision-making mix throughout cycles of planning, development, deployment and delivery. This takes energy, time and human resources. Good management of our policy processes means factoring in the R&E contribution at all stages to get outcomes that are well-informed from the outset and measured to prove the worth of publicly resourced actions.

The production of timely, quality knowledge is both an art and a science in complex operating environments. In the New Zealand social policy context, Ministries, Government agencies and a wide range of knowledge creation sites in the academic, community and private sectors interact in a multitude of ways to inform policy development and operation.

In this edition we see examples of a "new framework to bring greater cohesion" at the Department of Internal Affairs and the "outcome focus" at Inland Revenue where evaluators work alongside strategic and policy

functions. In summary, the underpinning lesson is collaboration must be valued and invested in, if R&E is to be embedded in policy and service delivery.

We also have commentary in our lead stories about gaps in knowledge in the context of growing ethnic diversity in our society. Factoring a wider range of perspectives into the equation when forming policy interventions is going to become increasingly necessary to effectively manage and govern our multicultural reality. Knowledge in the form of values, views and hard numbers from Māori, Pasifika and other ethnic groups in our population needs to sit alongside the dominant Kiwi paradigm to chart cohesive progress. As noted earlier, one size does not fit all, so our actions should not reflect the contrary.

At a time of significant structural change in our population, we need to be thinking actively about future scenarios and policy responses. Smart modelling utilising demographic projections and intervention variables is vital for seeing ahead – something SPEaR has had foresight to invest in as evidenced in the article on page 6.

So collaboration in the context of interconnected social issues and shifting dynamics is fundamental. There are interesting and exciting challenges for us all as we seek to make a useful contribution to evidence-informed social policy leading to enhanced social wellbeing.

## Trialling best practice guiding principles

Draft content for SPEaR's best practice guidelines will be examined and further developed in a workshop on 10–11 May. Earlier developments have led to five guiding principles being selected to frame the more specific content which applies to working with Māori and Pasifika peoples, and which guide ethics and contracting practice. The principles are: respect, integrity, responsiveness, competency and reciprocity (see SPEaR *Bulletin*, December 2004).

Sue Walker, convener of SPEaR's best practice working group, said the next event would bring the participants of the first workshops together to test the principles, their application in research and evaluation, and the selection of illustrative case material. "They'll apply the principles to the research

process to see how they work and where the gaps are. The participants will have mock-up case studies and apply the draft material to all stages of a project: from planning and scoping, to commissioning, to undertaking, to analysis, reporting and utilisation. We want to build advice linking to the principles so the material is useful in a practical way."

The guidelines will be a web-based resource, supported by examples of best practice, references, and useful contacts. Sue said after the workshops, the guidelines would be trialled in several agencies, and it was hoped to have them finalised and published by October.

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# Understanding refugee life

*A three-year research project on refugees has provided a rich source of data on the refugee resettlement experience.*

*Refugee Voices* was a three-year project, undertaken by the Department of Labour's Immigration Service. The aim was to identify areas where refugee wellbeing could be improved through changes to support systems, and to provide information to assist with the development of resettlement policy and appropriate services.

The research involved interviewing 398 refugees face-to-face, and involved both recently arrived and established refugees. Participants were Afghan, Burmese, Ethiopian, Iranian, Iraqi, Somali, Sri Lankan, and Vietnamese.

Research Programme Manager, Stephen Dunstan, said the research provided a wealth of data. "The research provides a rich overview of refugee resettlement in New Zealand, but the findings should not be generalised to the wider refugee population. The results apply specifically to those interviewed. The characteristics and nationalities of refugees change over time depending on the circumstances of the world."

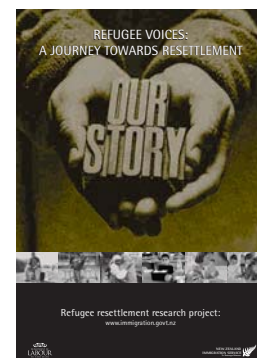
Stephen said the research showed refugees were a diverse group and a one-size-fits-all approach to resettlement is not possible. Other issues raised by the research were that refugees lacked an understanding of available services, and refugees came to New Zealand with expectations that were not always met.

The greatest challenge was finding work. Refugees also needed more help with accessing English language training and appropriate housing. However, the

provision of health services and children's schooling was working well, and support agencies were offering a useful service. The majority of participants also said they felt safe in New Zealand. "Overall, the research highlights the complexity of refugee resettlement, and the core importance of obtaining work and learning the English language.

"However, additional research is needed to allow us to more fully understand some of the issues raised by this project, including issues relating to discrimination and mental health."

Stephen said there was a need for case studies to further understand the resettlement and integration issues faced by certain groups such as men and women, children and older refugees, and case studies of successful employer-employee relationships, to demonstrate what made such relationships work. "We need more case studies that tell the positive stories of refugee life in New Zealand."



For more information go to  
[www.immigration.govt.nz/migrant/general/generalinformation/research/generalresearch/Refugees/refugeevoices/#top](http://www.immigration.govt.nz/migrant/general/generalinformation/research/generalresearch/Refugees/refugeevoices/#top)

## Participatory study of Somali

The Somali community in Hamilton is the subject of an in-depth study by a team led by Waikato University academic Bernard Guerin with his wife Pauline Guerin, Fatuma Hussein Elmi, and Abdirizak Abdi. The study, one part of a larger six-year project looking at the family and community impacts of migration, is called *Strangers in Town: Enhancing Family and Community in a More Diverse New Zealand Society*. It also includes analyses of census data and research on the social effects of Māori mobility.

Bernard's project complements the NZIS *Refugee Voices* project. "*Refugee Voices* spans all refugee groups across New Zealand. We have a different methodology – it is community research using participatory methods with one community. So there are a lot of activities in which we help the community. We participate in the community and learn that way. The two research approaches are complementary," Bernard said.

Bernard said the findings of the research had a number of implications for the way policy was implemented,

*Continued on page 10*

# Responding to ethnic perspectives

*The growing ethnic diversity of New Zealand's population provides new challenges and opportunities for research and evaluation, the Office of Ethnic Affairs (OEA) says.*

The OEA role is to advise primarily on ethnic groups originating from Asia, Africa, Central and South America, continental Europe and the Middle East. This includes people born in New Zealand, established migrants, recent migrants, and refugees.

The overall ethnic composition of New Zealand is changing in size and complexity. More than 200 ethnic identities were recorded in the 2001 census. By 2021, OEA expects the ethnic sector to account for around 18% of the population, up from 10% recorded at the last Census and 5% in 1991. The biggest increase will be people who identify with Asian ethnicity, who are projected to comprise 13.4% of the 2021 population. Projections indicate there will also be more Māori and Pacific peoples than today.

"It is important for research and evaluation to recognise this diversity and to inform on the situation of these distinct ethnic groups. For example, there are more than 60 ethnic groups from the Asian region living in New Zealand, and they can vary widely in terms of customs, language, religion and world views," said Vas Gavriel, Senior Policy Analyst for OEA.

"While some good research is being done, overall there are still huge gaps in data about the ethnic sector. In our experience, there needs to be more effective training in how to work across and between cultures, as this can have huge implications for research design, ethical considerations, and so on."

Vas said people in the ethnic sector contributed to society in every way, yet they tended not to be seen, heard or included in public policy process.

OEA has published *Ethnic Perspectives in Policy* as a resource for public policy makers. It provides a framework of values, and outcomes for agencies to consider, and other resources to facilitate working with ethnic communities. The outcome areas identified are acceptance of diversity, economic participation, education and training, settlement, health and housing. "These are areas that all deserve further research," Vas said.

"By using the framework outlined in *Ethnic Perspectives*, each department will be able to identify issues and assess the impact of their activities on ethnic groups. Achieving these outcomes also has significant implications for research and evaluation.

There is a strong demand for authoritative information on the wellbeing of 'other ethnic groups', in order to provide a sounder basis for policy decisions. This information may come from a variety of sources including surveys, administrative data and official statistics.

"The limited data available suggests social and economic outcomes for some ethnic groups are poor compared with those of what we might call the 'average New Zealander'. We need a consistent approach to information obtained through research and evaluation, to make ethnic communities more visible to public policy," Vas said.

"There is also a need for information to be reported consistently across government. Statistics New Zealand has reviewed the measurement of ethnicity, and implementation of the recommendations will help to improve the relevance and robustness of official ethnicity statistics for policy development, monitoring, and evaluation."

OEA is keen to develop best practice guidelines for monitoring, research and evaluation with ethnic groups, to provide greater transparency and accountability, in consultation with relevant agencies. "It is important that information about a range of ethnic groups' wellbeing is collected, and that data is reported in detail, consistent with Statistics New Zealand requirements," Vas said.



Vas Gavriel

*Ethnic Perspectives in Policy* is available at [www.ethnicaffairs.govt.nz](http://www.ethnicaffairs.govt.nz) For more information on the Office of Ethnic Affairs, email [ethnicaffairs@dia.govt.nz](mailto:ethnicaffairs@dia.govt.nz)

# A strategic approach to R&E

*The Department of Internal Affairs has developed a new framework to bring greater cohesion to its research and evaluation work across a disparate range of activities.*

Sue Walker, Manager of Research and Evaluation Services, said Internal Affairs is an organisation with many different types of responsibilities, such as supporting local government, contributing to community/hapū development, identity services (births, deaths, marriages and passports), civil defence and emergency management, executive government support, and regulation of gambling, racing and censorship.

“The department is the oldest government department and diversity has been a consistent characteristic throughout its history. We have a common purpose of serving and connecting citizens, communities and government to build a strong, safe nation, but not a core focus such as Justice or Social Development have,” Sue said.

“So in terms of an R&E strategy for the department, the diversity of responsibilities makes that hard to do. We don't have one or two key themes we can build the strategy around.” Instead, Sue has opted for an approach that will give more consistency to how people approach R&E. “We developed a framework that is about the way we do things, as much as it is about the specific nature of R&E itself.”

The framework, which will be operating from July, will bring a strategic focus to the use and management of R&E, with outcomes and strategic priorities driving R&E agendas of each business unit. “This gets people thinking of research and evaluation as part of the planning process – for example, if we are planning a new intervention, or changing an existing one, how

will we know it is working?”

Each business unit will decide its own R&E agenda and the senior management team will focus on research outcomes rather than individual business group research programmes.

An R&E advisory group will ensure the programmes align with the Department's outcomes and strategic objectives. This group will also provide peer reviews, and will report on the results and uses of research and evaluation to the senior management team.

The framework encourages the wide dissemination of research results, using the intranet, to build a strong and accessible evidence base. It will also provide for increased support and information on R&E for business groups, including a training programme to help business groups develop and use R&E more effectively.

Sue manages a small in-house team of five. “We have to service a large department. So to make sure we keep ahead of the game we need to have business groups thinking in advance about what they need to do. This framework will get more discipline, sequence and focus to the way the business groups work. It will help them prioritise their research and evaluation.”



Sue Walker

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## Canadian takes up senior MSD position



Canadian Marcel Lauzière has been appointed to the position of Deputy Chief Executive Social Development Policy and Knowledge at the Ministry of Social Development. He took up his new role in February 2005.

Marcel has held senior leadership positions in social policy research in Canada for the past 15 years. He was the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Council on Social Development, and before that he held a senior executive position with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and he was also Inaugural Executive Director of the Canadian Federation of Humanities and Social Sciences, and Executive Director of the Social Science Federation of Canada.

# Demography experts in NZ

*A SPEaR-funded workshop in December on demographic modelling and projections at Waikato University's Population Studies Centre updated academics and the policy community on state-of-the-art developments overseas. A follow-up seminar was held in Wellington to a wider audience of officials. Professor Ian Pool reports.*



Demography is a very highly applied subject; it was called "Political Arithmetick" in the early days of the Royal Society. Perhaps its most applied form is in the construction and interpretation of models and projections for policy purposes and for national accounts.

Policy makers cannot carry out "experiments" of the sort that are conventional in the laboratory sciences, especially in the social and economic sectors. Thus they turn to models to simulate possible consequences of policy initiatives, and to see how changes in the society or population will affect the achievement of these policies. Fundamental to policy models are demographic methodologies termed projections, macro-simulation modelling and micro-simulation modelling.

Simulation modeling is a rapidly expanding field, particularly in the social and economic areas. There is a need to bring the purveyors of these methodologies (typically social scientists) and users (typically the policy community) up-to-date with emerging techniques and the data sources they draw on.

Demographic projection techniques had taken a similar form, with what is termed cohort-component techniques, for a long time. These methods are arithmetically rather simple but involve large data sets, and detailed and time-consuming computations, albeit that the new generation computers make this far less laborious. Attempts to provide the same results using, say, more parsimonious mathematical or statistical models have proved futile.

But there is a nagging concern. Forecasts in demography, as in related fields, have traditionally given two misimpressions: that they provide exact future numbers, and that the trajectories they portray are deterministic, rather than the balance of probabilities. Agencies attempt to avoid the appearance of determinism by computing a series of different projections with varying assumptions, but recently there has been dissatisfaction expressed about this approach and empirical papers in journals such as *Nature* have shown the problems that have been engendered.

Their response has been to turn to what are called "stochastic" or "probabilistic" projection techniques. These yield an infinite number of parameters, but the results are then couched in terms of the probability that a trajectory or range of trajectories is likely to occur in the future. So far much of the work has been univariate, particularly on mortality assumptions, but the results are highly significant. The projections of mortality within quite rigidly defined limits (i.e. within the 50% level) yield results that show a remarkably wide range for the populations, especially the oldest of the old, estimated by these calculations, and thus have enormous implications for the provision of health and other social services.

As implied above both the purveyors and the consumers of these methods and their empirical outputs – both the scientists and the policy analysts – have to be aware of the methodological problems and how to interpret results.

The workshop provided the opportunity to meet some of the world's leading people in this field and discuss the issues raised, including whether these methods should be used by New Zealand government agencies, and whether we have the data and human capital that would facilitate this. It also gave the opportunity for discussing problems perhaps peculiar to New Zealand, such as those faced when projecting ethnicity.

## Overseas speakers

International speakers at the demography workshop included Shripad Tuljapurkar, Stanford University; Frans Willekens, Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute; Nico Keilman, University of Oslo; Heath Booth, The Australian National University; Tom Wilson, Queensland Centre for Population Research; John Bryant, Mahidol University, Thailand; and Michael Rendall, Office of National Statistics (UK) and Rand Corporation (US).

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# Evaluation in Inland Revenue

*The Inland Revenue Department has had a specialist evaluation team for the past 14 years, and current manager Prue Oxley has been part of the team for all but one of those years. The team of five works within the strategic development group.*

Prue Oxley says people are often surprised about the outcome and policy focus of Inland Revenue's evaluation role. "But we've always thought in terms of outcomes. With any intervention, we think 'how does it contribute to encouraging voluntary compliance, reducing compliance costs and ensuring the integrity of the tax system."

"Our focus is strategic. We are dealing with the underlying principles of tax administration and looking at the effectiveness of interventions and how well they are contributing to ensuring people pay tax voluntarily, and ensuring that people receive the payments they're entitled to. We work closely with the strategic development people and with the policy people."

Inland Revenue has an important role in administering social policies such as child support, Working for Families, student loans and paid parental leave, which Prue's team also evaluates. "So it's a lot wider than just tax." Prue cites the joint evaluation project, led by the Ministry of Social Development, on the Working for Families programme as a new area of work. "Inland Revenue has a huge role in Working for Families. Most family financial assistance is provided as a credit through the tax system."

Another example of her team's work is in the area of reducing compliance costs for small businesses. "We are developing a measure of small business compliance costs to use as a benchmark to measure the effectiveness of specific policy changes." Then there is the evaluation of the impact that auditing taxpayers has on future compliance. "That's a continuing interest and is at the 'hard end' of what we do."

Prue says the value of internal versus external evaluation is a perennial debate in the evaluation profession, and she comes down firmly on the side of internal evaluation. "In our kind of work, there are benefits in doing internal evaluation rather than relying only on external contractors." She lists the strengths of internal evaluation: first, internal evaluators are knowledgeable in terms of the policy and concepts behind what is being achieved and secondly internal evaluators "can get closer to how things are really implemented".



*Four of the five-strong IRD evaluation team, from left: Prue Oxley, Stuart Turner, Valnui Copeland and April Bennett. A fifth member, Tariq Saeed-Malik, was recently appointed.*

A third factor is the opportunity for dialogue throughout the evaluation. "We provide feedback on the conceptual thinking and data, while those implementing the programme can give us feedback on the reality behind the figures."

Disadvantages of internal evaluation include the possibility of "capture" and lack of objectivity. "This is a risk we counter through evaluation being a professional discipline with a methodology. If we understand the theoretical assumptions and if there is a sound methodological grounding, this guards against being 'captured'."

Prue has worked in the area of government research and evaluation all her working life. After graduating with degrees in anthropology and English literature, she worked with the Ministry of Justice for 13 years, followed by shorter stints with the Law Commission and what was then the Ministry of Māori Affairs, before moving to Inland Revenue. She enjoys working in the environment of a big department that combines both policy and operations. "There is a wonderful blending of the concepts and the actual practice. And that's what evaluation is about - seeing what happens to policy in practice."

# Social Investment Research Programme

*The Ministry of Social Development is working on a major cross-disciplinary research project, the Social Investment Research Programme (SIRP), to inform policy initiatives designed to improve social wellbeing.*

The project is coordinated by Dr Angelique Praat, Principal Analyst in the Research and Evaluation Strategy Unit of MSD's Centre for Social Research and Evaluation. It has been developed as a partnership with community sector expertise to draw on a range of views and experience.

The project's goal is to improve the evidence base to better support decision making on investments

directed at improving social wellbeing across all areas of social policy.

This broad goal is broken down into four objectives.

The first of these, developing a conceptual framework for understanding social wellbeing, has been the main focus of work on the project so far. This stage of the work has

involved looking at the literature and existing knowledge on what communities value and regard as important for their wellbeing.

"We used the definition of wellbeing in the *Social Report* as the starting point for our discussion of wellbeing, as this is one of the few places social wellbeing is defined in the New Zealand context," Angelique says. "Social wellbeing is the things people value in their life that contribute to them reaching their potential. It is a shorthand way of referring to the conditions in society – health, education, productive work and so on – that allow people to flourish. That's the way we understand it at the moment."

However, although there may be agreement about the broad essentials for wellbeing across society, different communities within society may have different views or emphasise different values.

"One of the things we are looking at is what different communities in New Zealand place value on, and think is necessary for them to have happy and healthy

lives. What would social wellbeing look like if it reflected the value of Māori and Pasifika communities? We are looking at how current understandings of social wellbeing reflect the value base of New Zealanders, and how we can broaden that understanding to take account of the diversity of views held by particular communities."

Angelique said social wellbeing was impacted on by any initiative directed at people, and the concept emphasised that all aspects of life were interconnected. "For example, an employment initiative will have wider impacts than just moving people from unemployment to paid work. There will be impacts in the areas of social connectedness, health, family life, time for leisure, and so on. Social wellbeing keeps the broader picture in mind. There is a growing consensus in the government social sector that 'social wellbeing' is something all agencies contribute to."

Another goal of SIRP is developing measures of wellbeing to both support the Ministry's social reporting frameworks and also its research and evaluation activities. Work to date has included examining international models of measurement of wellbeing to see what can be learned from those methodologies. 2004 saw visits from Dr Clive Hamilton, developer of the Genuine Progress Indicator in Australia; and Dr Ron Colman, developer of the Genuine Progress Index for Nova Scotia, Canada.

"The conceptual and measurement streams have been the focus of our work so far. We've been setting the groundwork for the other two objectives, the first of which includes identifying the drivers of wellbeing and interrelationships between them.

"The final objective, and the one that will bring the whole research programme together, is to build models, tools and frameworks that will allow us to better assess the impact of existing and proposed policies and programmes on social outcome measures."



*Angelique Praat*

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# Ensuring the wellbeing of Pasifika children

*Eliminating abuse and neglect of children will be the focus of a meeting in May planned as a follow-up to discussion on the issue at the Pacific Allied Council Inspiring Faith and Ideals Concerning All (PACIFICA) conference in February.*

The theme of the three-day conference was "Our Children, Our Future". Esther Cowley-Malcolm, President of the PACIFICA Auckland Central branch which hosted the conference, said the theme was chosen because children and youth comprise over half of the Pacific population and feature significantly in poor health and lower educational achievement.

"But what kind of a future is there for our children if they continue to feature as 'negative' statistics? The conference provided a forum for the Council as an organisation to openly address the issues of child abuse and neglect and us being steadfast and committed about being part of the solution, not the problem," Esther said.

"The 2005 annual conference has put these issues on the table for the first time so they are no longer under the carpet. We are now addressing these issues as an organisation and seeing how they are impacting on the Pacific community, and what we can do as an organisation and as Pacific women to make changes for the better. We're planning a follow-up meeting in May in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development to discuss the Pacific Plan in the *Te Rito* document and to give our views on how best this can be implemented."

The February conference included a presentation of the Pacific Islands Family Study being conducted by the Auckland University of Technology's Centre for Pacific Health and Development Research, and a presentation by Margie Fepulea'i (General Manager, Pacific Health, Counties-Manukau District Health Board) about their child health strategies.

The Tupu Trust held a workshop on how to resolve conflicts between teenagers and parents from a Pacific perspective, while the Ministry of Social Development gave a presentation on its positive parenting programme SKIP. There was a panel discussion on child abuse and neglect, Dr Jemaima Tiatia presented the findings from her PhD research on youth suicide, Lope Heath of the Brainwave Trust talked about nurturing children's brain development, and Police officer Regina Sheck spoke about her role in assisting Pacific youth. Massey University doctoral student



*Esther Cowley-Malcolm*

Tracey Mafile'o spoke about her thesis and work as a Tongan social worker, while paediatrician Dr Peuila Percival talked of her specialist work at Middlemore Hospital on child abuse and neglect.

The event included the inaugural Pasifika Smokefree Awards which recognised the work of Pasifika women in being smoke-free and making a significant contribution as Pacific women in their chosen categories - arts, sports, community and youth.

Esther said the conference had been attended by many key stakeholders and dignitaries including the Prime Minister Helen Clark and the three Pacific Members of Parliament. "There were also lots of young Pacific women attending including secondary students. They will be the future leaders of the organisation so it was good to see them there."

The conference received sponsorship from the Counties-Manukau District Health Board, the Auckland District Health Board Public Health Regional Services, SKIP, MSD, the Auckland City Council, and the Heart Foundation Pacific Heartbeat. "We are very grateful for their funding as it allowed us to host what was an exceptional conference."

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## Participatory study of Somali

*Continued from page 3*

and the findings could be used to develop approaches and intervention strategies that would enhance the wellbeing of families and communities.

For example, one finding so far was that the bureaucracies of western societies could be a major obstacle to refugees.

“At present the community has an average of six children per family, which can create complications with bureaucracies, even with something as simple as filling in forms. Also, we see prejudice and discrimination increasing in government departments and schools. We are working to understand and address these issues without blaming either the Somali or the bureaucrats.”

The research had also identified a need for specialised mental health and advocacy services for migrants and refugees in Hamilton. “Our project is working with others towards achieving this.”

He said many Somali were unemployed but still did seasonal and part-time work. While a lack of English language skills was a major obstacle, “innovative initiatives are required since our research has found that many Somali, both men and women, worked successfully as self-employed business people in the Middle East and Africa and could potentially do so here. We are looking at ways of utilising their business experience in the New Zealand context.”

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## People in R&E

**David Turner** took up the position of Director, Research and Evaluation with the Ministry of Justice in December 2004. David is responsible for overseeing the evaluation and statistical analysis of a broad research programme – a position similar to that he held with the Department of Labour for the previous 10 years. Prior to that, he worked in the United States for the General Accounting Office, the agency with legislative responsibility for auditing and evaluating federal government programmes. David is active in the Australian Evaluation Society, and is the chair of its Social Ethics and Standards Committee. He says his move to Justice presents an exciting opportunity.



**Dr Robin Peace** has recently left the Ministry of Social Development’s Centre for Social Research and Evaluation to join the School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work at Massey University as an associate professor based at the Wellington campus. Robin will lead the development of a new postgraduate diploma in social policy evaluation practice that will support capacity and capability building in evaluation across sectors. This initiative involves building close working relationships with a range of New Zealand and overseas universities, evaluation associations, central and local government, and private research agencies and with coordinating groups such as SPEaR and BRCSS.



# Opportunity for All

A summary of the Government’s social policy objectives, *Opportunity for All New Zealanders*, was released in December 2004 by Hon Steve Maharey, Minister for Social Development and Employment. It outlines the Government’s key strategies and initiatives, and identifies continuing challenges.

It is the first time a New Zealand government has published such a transparent summary statement of its social policy. *Opportunity for All* is broadly structured on the domains used in the *Social Report*: knowledge and skills; employment; economic standard of living; health; social cohesion; safety; civil and political rights; national identity; leisure and recreation; and physical environment.

Part 1 describes what the Government is doing to improve the quality of life of New Zealanders in relation to each domain.

Part 2 identifies five critical social issues for interagency action over the next three to five years: improving educational achievement among low socio-economic groups; increasing opportunities for people to participate in sustainable employment; promoting healthy eating and healthy activity; reducing tobacco, alcohol, and other drug abuse; and minimising family violence, and abuse and neglect of children and older persons.

For more information go to [www.msd.govt.nz](http://www.msd.govt.nz)

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## Diary notes

The Families Commission has established a *Blue Skies Fund* for new work on matters relating to the interests of New Zealand families that promote innovative ideas and approaches. Successful applicants will be allocated up to \$10,000 to produce a written paper or report of a standard suitable for publication by the Families Commission. The deadline for the first funding round is **29 April 2005**. A second call for proposals will be issued for September 2005. For more information email [Marny.Dickson@familiescommission.govt.nz](mailto:Marny.Dickson@familiescommission.govt.nz)

The Royal Society of New Zealand in association with NZ National Commission for UNESCO Social Sciences Sub Commission and BRCSS–Network is holding a workshop for social scientists on Thursday

**25 May, 2005** at Science House, Wellington. Entitled *Towards 2020: Challenges for the Social Sciences Community*, it will address gaps in the social science landscape, ways of encouraging innovation, the challenges posed by the requirements for new interdisciplinary knowledge and methodologies and the changing demographic structure of the research community. For more information email [cris.westrupp@rsnz.org](mailto:cris.westrupp@rsnz.org)

The Royal Society of New Zealand is also launching a new open access social sciences journal, and is calling for nominations for the journal's Editorial Advisory Board. See <http://www.rsnz.org/publish/socscinoms.php> for nomination details and further information or email [Alison.Wilson@rsnz.org](mailto:Alison.Wilson@rsnz.org)