

*Concerned about the government
Welfare Working Group recommendations?*

*Can't afford \$895 (discount rate)
to attend the Welfare and
Social Sector Policy
and Reform Conference?*

**Entry by koha
or \$8.95**

**FREE to
beneficiaries**

The \$8.95 Welfare Forum

Monday 20 June 2011

2.00 – 5.00 pm

St John's Centre, Willis St, Wellington

**Mike O'Brien, Paul Dalziel,
Sue Bradford, Wendi Wicks,
Māmari Stephens, Kay Brereton**



**Welfare Justice
The Alternative Welfare Working Group**

Inquiries and RSVPs: lisa@caritas.org.nz 04-496-1765

Welfare Working Group:

In 2010 the government appointed a Welfare Working Group to report back on ways of reducing “welfare dependency”. Their recommendations include:

- Extending work-testing requirements from 37 percent to 77 percent of beneficiaries;
- Increasing sanctions and penalties for many beneficiaries;
- Significant changes to hardship provisions;
- Providing contraception to all parents on benefits, to discourage the birth of children;
- Changing all benefit types to a job seeker allowance, paid at the rate of the unemployment benefit;
- Private and community delivery of some welfare services.

Welfare Justice – the Alternative Welfare Working Group

As a community response to the establishment of the government Welfare Working Group, three groups established an **Alternative Welfare Working Group** which held public meetings from Whangarei to Invercargill in the second half of 2010, and wrote two reports. Some of their conclusions were:

- The terms of reference for the government Welfare Working Group were too narrow to allow an adequate review of New Zealand’s social security – which is needed.
- There is no immediate crisis in the affordability of New Zealand’s social welfare system, and the Welfare Working Group’s own figures show we have 30 years to address underlying concerns.
- The problem definition of “welfare dependency” put the blame for poverty on beneficiaries, rather than considering wider social and economic policies which are needed to assist people out of poverty.
- Changes to Sickness and Invalids benefits need to face the discrimination faced by disabled people and must be based on a social model of disability.
- There are not sufficient jobs available at present at adequate wages to enable beneficiaries to move into work;
- All work needs to be valued – including the work of caring for dependents. Work is not limited to paid employment.
- Despite the efforts of many staff, too many beneficiaries experience the benefit system as punitive and unhelpful
- Welfare reform should be based on the relentless pursuit of wellbeing.

For more information, and copies of the Welfare Justice reports, please see:
<http://welfarejustice.org.nz>