

2018 Annual Chair Report for Social Services Waimakariri (SSW)

This annual report on behalf of Social Services Waimakariri reflects the 2017/2018 financial year. SSW exists to develop, enhance and coordinate service responses to health and social issues relevant to our community.

Social Services Waimakariri is a forum for collaboration between community providers of social services, and partners from local and central government, originally established in 2007 following a community forum that identified specific issues and needs. Working groups were created to address these issues under the umbrella of SSW. The SSW Charter was developed and signed in 2010 and included 32 local agencies and groups. The signatories to the Charter agreed to work together to support the purposes of SSW, to enhance social service delivery so that people can be connected to their community and freely access the services they need for their wellbeing. The principle belief being that by working together we will achieve more than we could by working separately.

The Management Team with responsibility for Oversight and Governance of SSW has met regularly throughout the year. The team reviewed and updated documents for, Terms of Reference, Strategic Plan, and Operational Plan. These have been documented in a redesigned easy to follow format focused on Our Vision, Our Goals and Our Intentions and are available on the SSW website. The SSW Advisory Group meeting process was discussed at Management Team and with the Advisory Group. It was agreed that the meetings would trial a new format beginning 2018 as a response to identified needs in the community. The process is to be reviewed at the end of the same year. Meetings will occur bi-monthly with invited speakers focused on a specific topic; the selected topics are Parenting, Addictions, Transport, Social Isolation, and Workforce Wellbeing. The meetings will be held at various venues throughout the Waimakariri District. The aim is to provide an inclusive platform for the wider social sector to explore these issues in more detail and to connect providers to collaborate around solutions. The Management Team will continue to meet bi-monthly throughout the year on the alternative months.

Madeleine Burdon, Representative from the Social Inclusion Working Group, resigned from the management team to focus on new projects within the council community team. Madeleine remains a valued member of the Advisory Group and the Social Inclusion Working Group.

The SSW Project Facilitator is pivotal in the management of SSW and its services. The facilitator role is focused on maintaining strong networks and connections to local service providers, a task recognised as a key element to the success of SSW. The facilitator compiles regular network notices and communications to keep services informed of opportunities and initiatives within the local region. They maintain an active presence and participate in

regional meetings and networking opportunities to ensure effective communications occur. The role supports the working groups, collates trend data, updates service mapping, and spread sheets, maintains the WEB site and coordinates monthly meetings. The role is supported with secretarial and administration tasks from the MSD secretary.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Focus Group meets to provide opportunity for collaboration of mental health service providers in Waimakariri, working together to identify gaps within the service provision and to advocate for mental health and wellbeing. The need for mental health services has continued to increase dramatically. Resources have struggled to keep up with the demand and the severity of the referrals, agencies being required to respond to presentations of severe mental health issues, situations of violence and aggression, multi problem and disconnected families, and a transient and insecure population in a culture of uncertainty. This has been a challenging year for the agencies who work in this area who have also identified a lack of specialist professional resources in rural areas to consult with or refer on to with cases of extreme difficulty.

Social Inclusion Working Group meet regularly working together on projects related to social inclusion, their philosophy being that “the absence of meaningful social interactions affects health and wellbeing, contacts and relationships with family and friends, and with neighbours on an individual level and with society at large” The group has continued with Welcome Bags identified as a need after the 2010 Earthquakes with the sudden and rapid increase in population in the Waimakariri. The focus of the welcome bags is to inform newcomers to the district with local information and services available. This initiative was reviewed with a workshop in 2015 with new resources added to the bags as they continue to be reported successful in reaching newcomers to the area. Over the past year the group has reviewed their Kaupapa, referencing against service mapping to continue to identify gaps with increasing social isolation across the district. The Welcome Bags will continue to be maintained as a process for reaching out and informing newcomers to the district of local information, services and resources.

The Children’s Team North Canterbury. This team is now an integral part of the North Canterbury District actively working with vulnerable children and families in the area. SSW remains involved through ongoing monitoring with a representative on the team prepared to act as an advocate should the need arise.

Community House Initiative. The Steering Group is proceeding with the process for this initiative led by community representatives. SSW remains involved with a representative on the group who feedbacks to the SSW Advisory group meetings.

Current Concerning Trends present challenges to the wider Waimakariri District Community. **Addictions** from a variety of sources create ongoing problems. The presence and availability of illicit substances, by manufacture, dealing, and individual use, continue to challenge all areas of the community and have a negative impact on societal functioning. As

the demand for supply increases users are engaging in criminal activities to access funding to satisfy their personal addiction needs. The misuse of alcohol and excessive gambling is also a negative on society. Such addictive habits impact widely on the whole of society, and across all age groups, affecting individuals, families, relationships, employment, increasing poverty, violence and aggression, and presenting extreme challenges to the limited number of agencies in the Waimakariri District who work with the consequences of these issues.

The rapid increase in the **Elderly** population has created a demand for services and resources to focus on the health and wellbeing of this group of people. Isolation, loneliness depression and suicidal ideation are issues reported to be on the increase. Those who are mobile and have access to transport are able to take themselves to local places to find contact with other people and someone to talk to. Groups have been observed gathering in supermarkets, shopping malls, hotels and local gambling places for the purpose of having conversations with others. Those who are not mobile are experiencing increased isolation and loneliness. Without human contact with others this has a negative impact on their health and wellbeing and vulnerability. While demand for services is increasing, support services previously offered by volunteers are on the decline affecting the availability particularly for transport and home visiting.

Workforce Wellbeing is to be the focus of an SSW meeting later this year. SSW acknowledges the impact on the workforce of the increased demands on the agencies. Issues of increased numbers of referrals, levels of severity of some cases, working in situations of risk, challenging clients, some dealing with incidents of aggression and violence, complicated mental health presentations, multi problem families, separated parents and the impact on children, transient clients, and the challenges of addictions. The year has seen all agencies working together to capacity to meet the demands made on the resources of their workforce in a professional manner, supporting each other with networking and collaboration.

Social Services Waimakariri is a unique and valuable community forum for collaboration between community providers of social services and partners from local and central government. Working together and taking action for the wellbeing of Waimakariri people.

It has been my privilege to be involved in this process over the past three years as the Independent Chairperson for Social Services Waimakariri. I have now retired from this position. Thank you to those who have been part of this journey with me.

Janet Eder, Independent Chair Social Services Waimakariri 2017/2018